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THE
RELIGIOUS SOUL
ELEVATED TO
PERFECTION.





THE
RELIGIOUS SOUL
ELEVATED TO
PERFECTION,

BY THE EXERCISES OF AN
INTERIOR LIFE;

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

The Abbé BAUDRAND,

By J—— P——

L O N D O N:

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M DCC LXXXVI.



NO. 10

ni religionem vobis concessam vestit
-tis et vos si agnoscet. Et quoniam vobis
-vobis est veritas. Deinde enim

debet credere fratres in deum non secundum
impressionem vestrae conscientiae sed secundum fidem. **T**o nesciis quae vestra
conscientia est. **C**onstituta est enim a spiritu

RELIGIOUS PERSONS.

et dicitur vobis al seculorum si blodd
-tumque ad cor me in caecitate quod est in tempore
intrae a ad litteras in scriptura de ad deum

RE^LE^IG^OU^S interior Souls,
faithful spouses of Jesus Christ,
after consecrating this little work
to your Heavenly Spouse, I now
present it to you: receive it then
from his hand, and not from mine.

The present I make you is indeed but small: but if God vouchsafe to accompany it with his grace,

it may become very valuable in your regard. Perhaps it may convey to your mind some ray of light; perhaps it may excite some pious sentiment in your hearts; perhaps it may even stir up some wholesome feelings of remorse in your souls.

Should it produce in you these happy fruits, it will not be unprofitable to you, and it will be a great consolation to me.

While I offer up my prayers to the Lord for you, I trust you will give me some share in your own; which being offered by pure hearts and innocent hands, must needs be efficacious.—Take, read, benefit by it.

Thus

Thus will my desires be fulfilled ;
thus will your hearts be sanctified,
and the glory of God procured :
which is the only thing I have in
view.

(iv)

and will be confined to the
same with such parts of the country
as have been or may be
subjected to the only right of
water.

ADVER-

ADVERTISEMENT.

YOU are here presented with every subject that is serviceable and conducing to an interior life.

Every Article, though short, contains some important and useful truth, under the various points of view in which it may be considered.

They may be made use of for meditations and considerations, by making

making choice of such among them as we think we stand in the greatest need of.

They may also be made the subject of a pious lecture; it often happens that we have not time to read long lectures, but have still enough to peruse one of these short articles.

If we would make a visit to the Holy Sacrament, one of these lessons may suffice to entertain one's self some time with God.

During the course of the day we have many spare moments, and one of these lessons may fill up that vacant space with profit.

Moreover

Moreover, as almost all the Exercises of a Religious life are here set before us, we may sanctify them by offering of them to God on the motives marked out.

In short, this little Work is a help that we may always have with us, and as it were in our hands, to be made use of at every moment and occasion, as God's grace shall move and direct us.



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T H E

RELIGIOUS SOUL

ELEVATED TO

P E R F E C T I O N.

A N I N T E R I O R L I F E.

1. **A**N interior life consists in continually reflecting upon ourselves, in often raising up our minds to God in the interior recollection of the mind and the heart: it consists in the constant mortification of the senses, in a total disengagement from creatures, and an intimate union with God: in a word, an interior life consists in dying entirely to ourselves, that we may only live to God, and in God.

I say more, an interior life is nothing but a continuation of the life of Jesus Christ himself in us. Happy is the soul that knows the whole extent of this great maxim!

B

But

But still more happy she that puts it in practice; such a one is entered into the true kingdom of God. When you are well acquainted with the sources of an interior life, with the exercises of an interior life, with the delights of an interior life, with the divine attractions, the salutary unctions, and a kind of fore-taste of the heavenly delights which it procures, then will you understand what the happiness is which souls enjoy in this true land of promise: to which God calls us, where he is waiting for us, where he prepares for us his grace, and in grace our solid happiness.

Alas! Religious Souls, what are we doing if we refuse to enter into this high way to salvation; and what is our life, if the interior spirit does not animate and sanctify it.

Without an interior life we shall never perfectly discharge our duties: the greatest part of what we shall do, will be done either without any motive at all, or out of human; our actions will then be without merit and without fruit: so our life will pass, and what shall we think of it when we come to die.

Without an interior life we shall never faithfully correspond with grace: we shall have received graces that might have made us great saints; but what fruit will they have produced before God? they will be so many talents squandered away. How terrible an account then shall we have to give? With-

out



out an interior life we shall never attain to perfection: so that we may aver, that every religious soul, who renounces an interior life, renounces perfection; to which, nevertheless, she is obliged, by her state and profession, to aspire. My God, hitherto I cannot be said to have lived; a life wholly natural, a life full of levity, trifling and dissipation, what a life is this; especially for a soul called to a holy state, bound by the most solemn engagements, whose whole conduct should be animated by an interior spirit.

3. All the glory of the King's daughter is from within, says the Holy Ghost: men judge by appearances, but God sounds the bottom of the heart. It is therefore to an interior life, to a life entirely new, that I am resolved to apply myself: make me to understand, O my God, the emptiness and nothingness of all besides.

Nothing is solid in this world, but to live a life which should prepare us for an immortal life: *Omnis gloria filiae Regis ab intus.* Psalm xliv.

The sources of an interior life are recollection, silence, docility to the lights of the Holy Ghost, and self denial.

The obstacles to an interior life are dissipation, infidelity to divine graces, the satisfying of our senses, and the cravings of self-love.

self-love. All illusions in an interior life may prove very dangerous. Be distrustful of yourself, and always walk with humility, prudence and counsel.

O Holy Spirit reign in our souls; establish therein that interior reign, which raises them to the glorious quality and dignity of your faithful spouses.

ON CONSCIENCE.

1. **W**E do not consult it; we neither hearken to it, nor follow it. Let us consult our conscience when we doubt; let us follow our conscience when we act, and fear our conscience when we resist and disobey it.

Conscience is given us to be our guide: if we follow it not, it becomes our judge. What a misfortune for a soul to see her conscience stand against her! and who can defend her, if her own conscience accuse, condemn, and torment her!

2. My God, how often does my conscience rise up against me! I commit no fault but it reproaches me with it, and I perceive that I am guilty of it. I will be henceforth more faithful to its light, more obedient to its voice, and more attentive to its reproaches.

When

When shall I be able to say with St. Paul: *I am not conscious to myself of any thing;* Nihil mihi conscient sum.
1 Cor. iv.

Never suffer me, O my God, to be unmolested by my conscience when I offend you, but raise its voice against me: let me be stung and tormented without ceasing with bitter remorse, and let me be sensible that so long as I am guilty, I shall not cease to be miserable.

3. Nothing is so easy, nothing so common and so pernicious, as to form a false conscience. We adopt many false principles and many false prejudices concerning a great variety of points. Nature, interest, self-love, all contribute to draw us into error; we are even afraid of seeing too much, and of being disabused; we voluntarily entertain our doubts, and cover ourselves with clouds of affected ignorance; we act thereupon and think ourselves secure; we blind, deceive, and lose ourselves. The day will come when we shall open our eyes, and even then happy will it be for us, if we lay aside the erroneous conscience in which we have lived! How great would be our misfortune, should it continue with us till death!

To hearken to my conscience, as to the voice of God; never to act against the B. 3, ^{and} ~~the~~ testimony:

testimony of my conscience ; to beg pardon of God for having so often contritivated the Holy Ghost, by resisting the voice and the lights of my conscience.

Behold, my God, what shall henceforward be the rule of my conduct. Happy had it been for me, if I had never swerved from this rule !

God opens to us a terrible book when he makes us read in the book of our conscience. The greatest punishment God inflicts upon us, is when he suffers our conscience to be tranquil and easy in sin. Yet there are pains of conscience which are only trials sent by God : these we must suffer with patience and resignation.

THE SPIRIT OF A RELIGIOUS STATE.

AN esteem of our state, a love of our state, a zeal for our state, are the foundation and base of an interior life for a religious soul.

1. An esteem of our state : how great is it in itself ! how holy in its duties ! how exalted and sublime in the designs of God ! Inspired by a particular light of God, directed by a special assistance of God, and become the nursery of an infinite number of saints, what an idea, what an esteem did they not entertain of this holy state ! What magnificent encomiums have not the holy Father

Fathers made of it! State truly sublime, sacred asylum of virtues, assured way to perfection, and living image of the heavenly Jerusalem!

Religious souls, the excellency of your state renders your persons the spouses of Jesus Christ; your soul the temple of the Holy Ghost; your life a perfect image of that of Angels: whose happiness it may be, agreeable to the sanctity of your state, to have no thought but that of heaven, no desire but of eternity, no occupation but that of prayer, no treasure but that of grace, no life but that of God; living only for God, with God, and in God.

2. The love of our state: - how can we but love a state, to which God himself has led us by the hand, in which we have so many means of salvation, where we find an asylum from the dangers of a wicked world, and which we hope not to quit till we enter one day into the kingdom of Heaven.

So long as a religious person retains a love of her state, she has an assured resource in all the circumstances she can fall into: whether she meets with grievances, or be exposed to temptations, or be subject to faults and failings, the love of her state either supports her under all, or reclaims her from all. I meet with difficulties, but yet I love my state, and must support them: I have temptations to struggle with, but never

never shall they shake the love of my state; I will, I must resist them: I am failing in many things, but would not for the world renounce my state; and must therefore redouble my fervour. God has called me to this holy state, I hope to live and die therein, and will begin to labour to die the death of the Saints.

3. Zeal for one's state: by our religious profession our state is become our lot, our family, our inheritance; thenceforth being animated with a holy zeal, we ought to take its interests to heart, to be solicitous for its glory, its preservation, its advancement and increase; to take part in what concerns it, to be afflicted at what afflicts it, and to rejoice at all that may contribute to its glory.

But the true and solid zeal for our state, is faithfully to fulfil the duties of it, to be exact observers of its obligations, to maintain the holy customs and usages that are received therein, and the wholesome practices established there.

Shew your zeal for your state, by honouring it by your works, by making it be respected by your conduct, by spreading both within and without the sweet odour of edifying example, and still more, by shutting yourself up in the closet of retirement and recollection; which are its soul, and will be its support, its consolation and joy.

I return.

I return you thanks, my God, for having conducted me to this holy state. I am sensible that in the world I should have had every thing to fear for my salvation. Touched with compassion for me, you have drawn me out of a dangerous dwelling-place, to place me in this holy asylum, and to load me with your graces.

It is true I have not fulfilled the obligations of it; but yet I love it, and will for ever retain this love engraved in my heart: I hope to become more faithful to my engagements, and will thus give proof of the esteem, the attachment and zeal I have for it.

Religious Soul, the spirit of your state essentially consists in three points of perfection; namely, in the spirit of an entire disengagement from the world, in the spirit of perfect self-denial, and in the spirit of an intimate union with God.

THE ATTRACTION OF GRACE.

WE must be acquainted with the attraction of grace; we must follow the attraction of grace; we must dread mistaking illusion for attraction.

1. We must be acquainted with the attraction of grace: in point of grace, we call attraction an interior motion which inclines us to good. Commonly speaking, every one

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one has a particular attraction which makes it well felt, and marks out to us the designs of God.

The attraction of grace carries some to mortification, and others to prayer; some to exterior works of zeal and charity, others to solitude and retirement. Every one has a particular attraction, which points out to him the way he must follow, to belong to God, and to go to Heaven: when we find no particular attraction, we must keep to the ordinary ways of providence.

To understand the attraction, we must reflect upon ourselves, we must ask light and direction of God, we must consult him who holds his place in our regard.

2. It is not enough to know the attraction of grace, it is moreover essentially necessary to follow and second it. When we are once acquainted with it, we must be docile and faithful to its direction. If we follow this attraction, we have reason to hope we shall attain to the sanctity to which God call us, and to the haven of salvation to which we aspire: if on the contrary we are wanting to this attraction, we have great cause to fear lest we mistake our way, and wander astray, by following a path which God has not marked out to us.

Nevertheless, if by misfortune we had missed our way for a time, we may enter into it again, and continue to follow it:

and

God

God never rejects us when we sincerely return to him.

The way to comply with the attraction of grace is to follow it readily, generously, and constantly: by following it in this manner, what progress do we not make in the ways of God?

3. We must dread lest we should mistake illusion for attraction: as the spirit of darkness sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light, we may be imposed upon by his wiles and artifices, and take that as coming from God, which comes from the devil. How often have souls been thus seduced and led astray! Pride, presumption, stubbornness and self-love are the usual causes of these errors and mistakes: whereas humility, docility, obedience commonly shelter us from them, or would soon recover us from the illusion, had we the misfortune to fall into it.

Give me light, O God, to know the way that should lead me to you; give me courage and strength to follow it faithfully: I only desire to know the way to salvation, that I may walk therein with a giant's speed, without ever stopping; you wait for my reaching the end thereof, that you may there receive me.

RELIGIOUS POVERTY.

1. THE vow of poverty requires that we wholly divest ourselves of all things: so that by virtue of this vow, we are forbid to possess any thing, to have any thing without leave, to give any thing, to receive any thing, to lend any thing, to borrow any thing, to give or take any thing as a pledge or security to be kept either by ourselves, our parents or friends; and that too under pain of sin, which is more or less grievous as the thing is of greater or less moment: in a word, all propriety, all dominion, all bequeathing of any thing, is entirely forbidden us.

We are not even mistresses of ourselves, but we belong to God. Happy renunciation, which delivering us from temporal solicitudes, set us at liberty to occupy ourselves only with God, to possess nothing but God, and to leave to God the entire and absolute possession of ourselves.

2. The spirit of poverty enriches us with the treasures of Jesus Christ himself: we forego and give up the fatness of the earth, that we may receive the dew of Heaven; we renounce temporal and perishable goods, that we may acquire those that are spiritual and heavenly. Is then our heart quite empty to receive them? Many quit considera-

derable riches in the world, and become attached to mere trifles and baubles in religion: What a blindness is this! How base-minded, how mean-spirited are such souls! Do they ever reflect that they are tied by a solemn vow? Let us love poverty as our mother, she is preferable to all riches: let us be poor with Jesus Christ, who chose to be poor; the whole treasure of a faithful Spouse, is the heart and tender affection of her heavenly Bridegroom.

3. The practice of poverty demands of us many sacrifices: we shall never be truly the poor of Jesus Christ, but inasmuch as we shall be sincerely disposed to feel the effects, and consecrate the acts of poverty. The exercise of it in all the various exigencies of a religious life is as follows.

1. In point of poverty, to be above all things exact and punctual in asking the Superior's leave, even in the smallest matters.

2. Never to complain when in occasions we think something is wanting to us, unless forced to it by absolute necessity.

3. To deprive ourself not only of all that is superfluous, but even to know how, when needful, to bear the want of what is in some sort necessary.

4. To love and always make choice of that which is worst in the house, in the cell; dress, furniture, victuals; in a word, in all things.

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5. From time to time to take a view of our cell, to see if there be any thing that is not according to the spirit of the strictest poverty.

6. When on this head we see it incumbent on us to retrench something, to take up with something, to make some more sensible sacrifice to God, let us lift up our eyes to our Crucifix, and say with a great Saint: Behold him who was spirit of all things; when I see him how can I complain?

Holy practices! Perfect sentiments! To these I will endeavour to conform myself, O my God! For I am resolved to live and to die poor after your example, to imbibe your spirit, to put on your livery, to have nothing but you, to possess nothing but you, and to have no riches but your indigence. I shall be rich enough if I have your heart, your grace, your love, and your cross; I renounce all that I may possess them: in Heaven you have prepared for me true and solid riches.

Let us engrave these great truths deep in our hearts, *First*, That nothing is so easy and so common as to blind and impose upon one's self with regard to poverty, to frame false principles, false maxims, and a false conscience. The *Second*, That among the Religious who have the misfortune to lose their souls, the greatest number are damned for sins against poverty! *Blessed are the*

the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum cœlorum! Matth. v.

THE VOW OF CHASTITY.

1. THE life of virgins consecrated to God raises them in a manner to the condition of Angels: they lead on earth a life altogether heavenly; they every where follow the Lamb without spot, who has vouchsafed to choose them for his Spouses. Divine Virtue! which seems to exalt them even above the Angels: these celestial intelligences are pure spirits, free from the contagion of body and senses; whereas a Christian Virgin, cloathed with a mortal body, and subjected to the empire of the senses, frees herself in some sort from their tyranny, and transports herself in spirit into the sublime region of the citizens of Heaven. Ye faithful Spouses of a God made man, how great is your dignity, how great your glory!

2. But this Heavenly Spouse is a jealous God: a thought, a look, a sentiment, whatever is deliberate, displeases his eyes and offends his heart, when it is ever so little opposite to this heavenly virtue. The soul of a Virgin should be the temple of God, and the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost; she ought to respect herself, and dread the very shadow and appearance of

evil. It is to these privileged souls in particular that God saith: *Be ye holy, because I am holy: Sancti estote, quoniam ego sanctus sum. Lev. xi.*

3. But besides this essential purity, which is so necessary, so precious, so recommendable in every religious soul; for such as are more interior, and desire to aspire to a perfect state, there are four different sorts of purity still more elevated and worthy of God, *viz.*, purity of mind, purity of heart, purity of actions, and purity of conscience: the whole extent and perfection of which I would have you to understand.

Purity of mind, which suffers not a person to dwell on a thousand thoughts, which being idle, unprofitable, frivolous, and foreign to her purpose, serve only to occupy, distract, disturb, and lead her astray...

Purity of heart, which renounces all attachment, every inclination and sentiment that is wholly natural and but too human, and which is apt to divide her heart and affections.

Purity of actions, in the grandeur of the motive which conducts, in the sublime intention which directs, in the ardour and fervour of the affections that animate all the actions of life.

Purity of conscience, which sovereignly fears and dreads, a thousand times more than death, the smallest faults that can wound it,

it, and tarnish the brightness of this mirror, which represents to us God himself.

How great, how perfect is this state, O my God! Happy those souls whom you call to it, who labour to raise themselves to such a dignity! Why should not I myself use my best endeavours, if not to attain to it, at least to aspire thereunto, by the inviolable purity which the sanctity of my state obliges and raises me to.

Lamb without spot, who art the Holy of Holies, yea Purity and Sanctity itself by essence, Oh! purify and sanctify all within me; and having vouchsafed to choose me in the number of your spouses, give me the sentiments and the perfection that may make me worthy of your choice and your heart.

Cor mundum crea in me, Deus: God of all purity, create and fortify in me a clean heart. Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt: Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God, and enjoy for ever his adorable presence.

THE PROPERTIES OF RELIGIOUS OBEDIENCE.

1. **L**E T us consider obedience, not in men, but in the person of a Man-God; let us see what were the properties of his obedience so wholly divine, and copy it out in the practice of our life.

1. The *promptitude* of his obedience: The first step he took on his coming into the world, was to obey: his heavenly Father's will was his first, his only rule; never did he deviate from the sanctity of his ways: *In the head of the book it is written of me,--- that I should do thy will.* Heb. x.

2. The *extent* of his obedience, which was without exception, without distinction. He submitted to all those that held the place of God in his regard; sometimes to the just, such as Joseph and Mary; sometimes to sinners, such as Pilate and Herod: He will say to all in those words: *I must be about my Father's business.* In iis quæ Patris mei sunt oportet me esse. *Luc. ii.*

3. The *docility* of his obedience: He lived with Mary and Joseph during thirty years, and the sacred text only says of him, *That he was subject to them.* Erat subditus illis. *Luc. ii.*

4. The *generosity* of his obedience: Whatever was most hard, most painful, most rigorous, viz. labours, torments, reproaches, all was accepted, all was accomplished by him; so that he might say every moment of his life: *Consummatum est: All is consummated.* John ix.

5. The *duration* of his obedience: From the crib, in which he was born, to Mount Calvary, where he was crucified, he constantly walked in the way of obedience;

he

he walked in it till death, even the death of the cross: *Factus est obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.* *Phil. ii.*

2. Such were the sacred characters of his obedience; such is our perfect, our divine model. We own it, we adore it, we make choice of it, we know it is what we should imitate and follow; and yet we refuse to obey, or if we do obey, in what manner do we very often do it? and in this obedience, so perfect in itself, how many imperfections do we discover?

We obey, but it is after a thousand delays, after deferring, temporizing, and driling to the last moment when we can no longer postpone it.

We obey, but with regret, against our will, and in a manner that shews we drag the yoke, or carry it with an ill grace.

We obey, but after a thousand representations, and starting numberless difficulties, that grieve the Superiors, who sometimes are forced to yield, in order to manage troublesome and untractable minds.

We obey, but only to a certain degree, and in certain things: for to submit to some particular practices and customs, is, in the opinion of some persons, to subject themselves to trifles and punctilioes that only suit vulgar minds. All this is as much as to say, that we obey indeed, but only by halves, but with regret, as, and when we please, as far

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far as we think fit; which in truth come to this, that we practise no obedience at all.

O indocility and independence, natural to the human mind! how opposite are you to the Spirit of God! and you, holy obedience, how different are the marks with which you are stamp'd! Is it thus we obey a God, whom we ought to consider in the person of those that command?

Ah! wo to me if ever I go aside from the paths of a ready, generous, and constant obedience! The divine model which you set before me in your own person, Adorable Saviour, shall be the rule of my conduct: God forbid I should ever depart from it: *Vir obediens loquetur victorias: The obedient soul shall gain great victories.* Prov. xxi.

THE PRECIOUS ADVANTAGES OF
OBEDIENCE.

WE find in obedience three precious advantages; a fund of merit, a fund of security, and a fund of consolation. These are the precious fruits that are gathered in this land of promise.

1. A fund of merit, it being the property of obedience to ennoble our actions; for that such as are indifferent, it makes holy; and those that are already holy in themselves, it renders still more meritorious. Thus to rise from sleep, to take our nourishment, and even to take a little relaxation,

tion, which in themselves are indifferent actions, become holy when vested with the merit of obedience: Thus to pray, to practise mortification, to apply one's self to acts of charity, are in themselves so many meritorious actions, but become infinitely more so, when consecrated by obedience. Thus every action, every step, every moment of life, will be ennobled by this eminent virtue. What a fund, what a treasure of merit will then attend a life of thirty or forty years thus led in continual obedience!

2. A fund of security. Every other life besides that of obedience is liable to illusion. In the world devout souls may practise great virtues, and perform heroick actions; but yet they will always have room to fear lest they do their own will rather than that of God, lest they walk on with great speed out of the way, and meet with some Angel of darkness that puts on the appearance of an Angel of light. Thus they will always walk on with trembling, and as it were upon thorns. The obedient Religious, on the contrary, is ever secure in what she does, ever tranquil and easy in her proceedings; she may say with St. Paul: *I know whom I have believed, and I am certain.* She is certain by faith that she acts agreeably to the will of God, so long as she is directed by obedience; she walks securely when she walks by this way, which is that of God.

3. A

3. A fund of consolation. In every state we meet with things that are disagreeable and disgusting: in all employments there may be rocks and dangers. Now in these difficulties and perplexities to whom shall a soul, that is not guided by obedience, have recourse. Shall she present herself before God, to find a refuge in him?

In swerving from obedience she deprived herself of the graces which God designed for her; she exposed herself to danger which came not from God; and thus depriving herself of the great consolation she might have had, instead of consolation she will experience nothing but trouble and remorse.

How different is the lot of an obedient soul! She will go to the foot of the Altar, she will address herself to God with confidence, and with this holy confidence she will say to him: O Lord my God, you see my sufferings and the state I am in; it was you that put me in it, I am reduced to it by your order; I beg your help, and hope for it from your mercy: your word is express, and your heart is my warrant that you will fulfil your promise. Thus will it be during the course of our life, thus will it be more especially at our death: for it is then in particular that obedience will make us taste its delights. How sweet, how consoling will it be thus to finish our course, to give up

up the ghost in the bands of holy obedience, to go in this manner to appear before God, to surrender our soul into his hands, and receive the recompence he has promised to faithful souls!

THE MARKS OF TRUE VIRTUE.

TRUE Virtue is never satisfied with itself, nor dissatisfied with others; it aims at nothing but contenting God.

1. It is never satisfied with itself. Indeed when we know ourselves, can we be satisfied with ourselves; seeing ourselves subject to so many passions, imperfections, and faults; to so much sloth, tepidity, and negligence; so unfaithful to grace, so little advanced in virtue, so little desirous of perfection, and so full of corruption and misery?

I say, seeing all this, so far from being content with ourselves, should we not rather humble, afflict, and annihilate ourselves, and be penetrated with a salutary fear?

Accordingly the greatest Saints were ever the most humble and dissatisfied with themselves; they considered themselves as great sinners; whatever they did for God, they never thought they did any thing; they considered not what they had done, but what they should have done; and after practising the most eminent virtues, they said

said sincerely from their heart: *We are unprofitable servants; Servi inutiles sumus.*
Luc. xvii.

This is solid virtue indeed; but are these my real sentiments in the sight of God?

2. True virtue is never dissatisfied with others; being only attentive to itself, it examines not the conduct of those for whom it is not accountable. As far as it can, it seeks to praise and excuse every one; and if it cannot excuse the action, it excuses at least the intention. If it be accused by others, it answers not; if ill-treated, it believes it deserves such treatment, and to have given occasion to it: it attributes every thing to itself, that it may not condemn others. Whatever others do appears to it better than what it does itself. What others do for it, be it ever so little, it thinks it too much: while it fears extremely to be wanting to others, it never believes that others are failing in its own regard. If such only be true virtue, O my God, am I found in your eyes to have the least traces or foot-steps of it?

3. True virtue seeks nothing but how to please God; this is the great object that draws its whole attention, and excites its most ardent wishes and desires. Its eyes, shut to all besides, are open only to God: it desires nothing but God, seeks nothing but God, wants to find nothing but God, and

and looks upon every thing else as just nothing at all. Provided God be satisfied with it, it is quite content; all its views are to please him, all its desires are to love him; and its heart wholly bent on possessing him. Every natural view, every human consideration, every low and earthly motive is banished from its heart: were it forced to make the greatest sacrifices, to carry the heaviest crosses, to lose and be deprived of all things, provided it pleases its God, and possesses its God, it has every thing, it possesses every thing; and if God be content, it is contented with all. My God, how far are these sentiments above my own, and how remote am I from true and solid virtue! Hitherto it has been a stranger to me, and like a thing unknown, I have only built on a quicksand, my virtue, without any solid foundation to rest upon, is false, defective, hypocritical and apparent. This is my present state, and the subject of my tears. It is therefore time for me to labour, I say not to perfect virtue in me, but to give it entrance into my heart; trusting that grace will give it increase, and afford me final perseverance.

FIDELITY TO GRACE.

EVERY thing should engage a Religious Soul to be inviolably faithful to grace. The excellency and the price of grace, the
D designs

designs of God who grants her his graces, the immense merits she may acquire by being faithful to grace, the fear of the loss and substraction of these graces; all these are so many motives that induce and press her to be inviolably faithful.

1. The excellence and the price of grace. Grace is a gift of God, a heavenly light, a divine attraction, a means of salvation and perfection: grace is the voice of the heavenly Bridegroom, which makes itself heard in the heart of the faithful Spouse; a sweet invitation to follow and unite herself to him. Grace is even the price of the blood of Jesus Christ himself, and all the graces that are bestowed upon us are merited for us, as it were, by so many drops of his adorable blood. How faithful then should we not show ourselves to this precious grace! how ought we to hearken to its voice, how ought we to co-operate with its sweet attraction!

2. The designs of God who grants us these graces. There is no Religious Soul on whom God has not the views of a special mercy, and a distinguished providence; and it is by grace that he makes them known, it is by grace he executes and fulfils them; but then that they may be accomplished in her, she must correspond, on her side, with his graces, without which all God's designs upon her are stopped and interrupted.

terrupted. Insomuch that a soul which resists grace, resists God's designs upon her, and counteracts the views of his wisdom. Happy is she that presently enters anew into these his merciful views, by becoming more pliant and submissive to his impressions! but a thousand times more happy she that never deviated from them!

3. The prodigious merits which may be acquired by fidelity to grace. There is no day, nor scarce a moment in which God does not favour a Religious Soul with his graces, and no instant wherein, with the help of grace, this soul may not merit the kingdom of Heaven. If all her life be an uninterrupted series of acts of fidelity, her whole life will be an augmentation of merits; and in the run of many years thus concentrated to this fidelity, what an extent, what an abundance, what a treasure and load of merits must she not have acquired for eternal glory! How great, how noble is this point of view, and how consoling to a religious soul, that renders herself faithful to the voice of her God!

4. The fear of the subtraction of these graces! which is what God threatens those souls with, who abuse them; and it is thus he punishes such as are guilty of this abuse. Unfaithful soul, says he to her, I loaded you with my graces, but you have rejected them; my lights shall therefore be turned

another way ; other souls shall be favoured with them, and darkness shall cover you : I will make the dew of Heaven to fall on a soil that is better disposed, and ungrateful lands shall no longer receive its copious infusion.

Ab ! had you been willing to understand the gift of God, what blessings would he not have lavished upon you ! begin then anew to practise that fidelity which is due to my graces. Be no longer unfaithful to them, and I will continue to be liberal towards you. Yes, my God, I submit to your grace, I yield to its wholesome impressions, I will be henceforth faithful to it ; and the oftener I have resisted it, the more attentive I will be hereafter, to receive none in vain : but will give it a more ready entrance into my heart, it shall have in me a more absolute sway, and a more generous and constant correspondence. Why should I refuse to obey, when it is the heavenly Bridegroom that stands at the door of my heart ? *We exhort you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain : Exhortamur, ne in vacuum gratiam Dei recipiatis. 2 Cor. iv.*

G O D A L O N E.

O N L Y God in my mind, only God in my heart, only God in my actions.

1. Only God in my mind. He only gave it me, that I might consecrate to him all

all its thoughts, all its views, all its projects and purposes. Happy the souls that can only think of God, only occupy themselves on God, and have their mind constantly raised and united to God! This is the ineffable privilege of the blessed spirits in Heaven. So long as we sigh upon earth, our mind is either filled with a thousand unprofitable objects, or wanders astray upon a thousand things that are foreign from its purpose: affairs, employments, amusements, a thousand baubles, seem to dissipate our minds, and hinder them from keeping themselves constantly united to God, and employed on his presence. But I will endeavour, at least, often to call the sweet remembrance of God to my mind: I will not deliberately employ myself with one thought that may banish from me the thought of my God; I will recall it to mind when I shall have lost it: I will unite myself to the Saints in Heaven, who never lose sight of him: by this means I shall have in this world some share of the happiness they enjoy in glory.

2. Only God in my heart. All that enters my heart besides you, O my God, serves but to trouble, to agitate, and to withdraw it from its centre. Is then my heart too great for you? don't you suffice to fill and satisfy it? What has it found out of you but uneasiness and bitterness? What will it find in you but sweetness and peace?

D 3.

Yes,

Yes, my God, I give you my heart, my whole heart, my heart for ever: you alone shall live therein, no creatures whatever shall have any place in it: nothing shall be admitted there that is not my God. How happy shall I be when God alone shall there establish his reign and the sovereign empire of his grace and love! I have no heart but for God, and I will have it to belong wholly to him: I will have God in my heart, and my heart in God. Alas! how great is our unhappiness! We give our heart to God, and we take it from him again. Only God deserves our heart, and it is often he alone to whom we refuse it. From this time forward my heart must be as much disentangled from the earth, as if it were already in Heaven.

3. God alone in all my actions, seeking nothing but him, desiring to find nothing but him, acting only with a view to please him; with a pure intention, with a virtuous motive, and without any regard to my own interest. Would I lose the merit of my actions, by doing them barely out of human motives, and with every other view but that of God? Alas! how many actions have I not lost, for want of consecrating them to him? What have I gotten by this, but the grief of having lost them, and the danger of appearing before him with empty heart and hands, after so many years spent and

and graces received? God alone in all, in every place, and for ever; this is my sole desire, and my true happiness: it is all I desire for time and eternity. Only God in my mind, to enlighten it; only God in my heart, to possess it; only God in my actions, to sanctify them. Deus meus & omnia: *My God and my all:* What is all the rest to me?

P R A Y E R.

P RAYER should be our occupation, our consolation, our sanctification,

1. Our occupation; such it is to the Angels in Heaven, and such it should be to us on earth: an occupation very sweet, very holy, and most worthy of persons consecrated to God. St. Luke tells us, *we must pray always:* Oportet semper orare, c. xviii. Indeed always to do the will of God, is always to pray. But besides the times that are particularly allotted for prayer and the employments of our state, there are a great many leisure moments during the course of the day which we have to ourselves; and these precious moments an indolent and negligent soul unhappily loses, which a faithful soul is careful to turn to profit. Retiring into her oratory, or to the foot of the Altar, she there pours out her heart in a short, but fervent prayer; and thinks herself happy thus to go from time to time to renew her-
self

self before God, and put herself in his presence. Thus her whole life is sanctified; prayer fills up its vacancies, becomes its occupation, and consecrates all its moments.

2. Prayer should be our consolation. What, in effect, more comfortable to a soul that loves God, than to entertain herself familiarly with him, and to pour out her heart into his adorable heart, to commune intimately with him, to lay before him her intentions, her desires, her grievances, and all that concerns her, to pay him the homage of her sentiments and affections, to beg pardon for her infidelities, to petition for abundant supplies of his grace; in a word, to be as it were alone with her God alone, and to converse with him heart to heart! What joy, what delight must this afford her!

A religious soul shall go to prayer sorrowful, languishing, discouraged, and disconsolate; but shall return re-animated, renewed and comforted. We find a sweetnes and an unspeakable satisfaction in conversing with those we love; we pass whole hours together in their company, and these hours seem to us but so many moments; if then we are faithful, how can we but find the same sweetnes, and even such as is much more solid, in conversing with God, the well-beloved of our hearts?

3. Prayer will be our sanctification, by the abundant graces it will draw down upon us,

us, by the interior lights it will convey to us, by the pious sentiments with which it will inspire us, and by the eminent virtues it will enable us to practise. But what is far more, in prayer we unite ourselves with all the saints in Heaven, with all the just on earth, or to speak more properly, with Jesus Christ himself, who prays in us, and for us.

With what a desire, with what eagerness, with what a holy ardour should not all these motives inspire us for prayer; and yet, my God, we grow weary of, and even find a disgust to, this holy practice: the time we employ therein seems long and tedious; we go to it as late as we can, quit it as soon as we can, and retrench as much as we can from the time appointed for it: Are these the sentiments and dispositions of a faithful spouse of Jesus Christ?

My God, hitherto I have never prayed as I ought to have done; my prayers have been made up of nothing but distraction, dissipation, sloth, disgust and weariness. You heard me not; nay, scarcely did I hear myself. I will pray for the future, but with more respect, attention and fervour; for then I may pray with confidence, and the incense of my prayers will ascend up to the very throne of your mercy, to obtain for me your graces and favours.

THE DESIRE AND CARE OF PERFECTION.

1. **B** E ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect, says Jesus Christ to us: Estote perfecti, sicut Pater vester cœlestis perfectus est: *Math. v.* How great and sublime is the pattern he proposeth to our imitation! Vile creatures as we are, are we capable of attaining to such high perfection? Can frail mortals carry their views so high? Be of good courage, all you that aspire to perfection: God expects not that you attain unto it, but that you aspire after it without ever ceasing. Perfection is not the work of a day, but of our whole life: we walk on step by step, we advance insensibly; and provided we do not stop short, do not turn aside, do not flag in the way, God will be contented with us. Judge then of yourselves, but let it be without flattering yourselves, or dissembling your true state.

2. What ground have you made in the paths of perfection? What efforts have you made to arrive at it? To do this you have been favoured with graces: what fruits have they then produced in you? If you are not upon your guard, your whole life will pass in willing and not willing, in purposing and never executing, in beginning and never coming to a conclusion: thus at the end of your course you will find yourself as little advanced, as you were the first day.

day you entered into religion, and this too after so many graces and good purposes.

Nevertheless the voice of God called you to perfection, and the sanctity of your state obliged you to tend and advance towards it.

After all, there is time still remaining: but then you must not lose it, for it is pressing and precious, and may come to fail you. Wherefore begin anew to aspire to perfection: labour at it with so much the greater fervour, as you have been more negligent. To have seriously begun, is to have advanced considerably in the fight of God, who will reckon as done what you had resolved to do. His grace is ready, be you in good earnest, and you may yet reach the end.

3. The desire we ought to have of perfection, should be a sincere desire, coming from the heart; an ardent desire, animating all our affections; an efficacious desire, that shews itself by works; a generous desire, capable of making sacrifices; a constant desire, that knows not what it is to grow tired and weary. Sometimes we have a will, but it is a weak and ineffectual will; we will one day, and the next we seem to fear the grace that induces us to will: we will and wish for the end, without wishing for the means; that is to say, we will and we will not. Yet after all, Religious Soul, have

have you any thing of greater consequence, any thing more essential to your true welfare either in this world or the next, than the great work of your perfection.

Now the means to attain to it are these.

1. To be inviolably punctual and exact in your duties and obligations. 2. To shew yourself generous and resolute in overcoming yourself. 3. To shun all deliberate faults. 4. To refuse God nothing. 5. To have in all things a most pure intention. Above all, 6. To engrave these great maxims of perfection very deep in your heart, which are, to place your glory in humiliations, your riches in having nothing, and your delight in the cross: this is all man, this is to be a perfect man, according to the model of the Man-God: *Hoc est omnis homo.* Eccles. xii.

How far, O my God, have I yet to go, before I reach this happy point! Scarce have I yet made one step towards it: consequently I ought to hasten my pace and renew my fervour, since I should be sorry to die an imperfect Religious; and yet my life is full of nothing but negligence and imperfections. Let your grace, O God, come speedily to my aid, and conduct me by large steps to the desirable end to which you have called me.

PERFECT SELF-DENIAL.

THE necessity of this self-denial, the extent of this self-denial, and the advantages of this self-denial.

1. The denial that costs us most dear, is the denying of ourselves. It is with difficulty, I own, that we renounce our goods, our parents and friends; but the renouncing of ourselves is a sacrifice much more painful, and a victory far more difficult; seeing that self-love cries out against it, the senses take the alarm, and the whole man trembles in every joint.

My God, hold out to me your succouring hand! I am faint-hearted when I must make war upon myself: it is then I feel all my weakness and want of power: I could wish to be yours, but cannot resolve to renounce myself, without your succouring grace this self-denial is above my strength.

Notwithstanding, this self-renunciation is absolutely necessary. I hear your voice which says to us all: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and follow me: Si quis vult venire post me, abneget semetipsum & sequatur me. Matth. xvi.*

2. But in what, O Lord, must we renounce ourselves?---In all things.---Hearken then to me, faithful Soul, saith the Lord.

Renounce your views, your ideas, your projects, your own judgment: so much for the mind.

Renounce your desires, your affections, your inclinations, your repugnances: so much for the heart.

Renounce your ease, your conveniences, your sensuality, your delicacy, your satisfactions: so far for the senses.

When you shall find yourself more strong and courageous, you then may enter into a way still more perfect.

Renounce your will, your hasty temper, your sensibility, your natural activity: for you are to remember, that it is in yourself this great work of self-denial must be effected.

Renounce your gusts, your consolations, the sensible sweetenesses which are sometimes found in my service; lest you should become attached to them, and should nourish with them your own self-love, which is contrary to my holy love.

Such is the extent of the self-denial which I expect from you, if you sincerely desire to give yourself wholly to me.

3. This renunciation is salutary and highly advantageous; Be persuaded that whoever generously embraces it, cuts up at once the root of all vices, sows in her soul the seeds of all virtues, and with one step arrives in a manner at perfection.

Religious

Religious Soul, you see the sacrifices I require of you, but you know not the graces I prepare for you. Enter, enter, my Daughter, into this high road of self-denial: The first step is that which costs the most; when once you are entered into it, I will conduct you, I will support you, and afford you comfort. As the world mingles bitterness with its sweets, so I will season all your amaritudes with sweetness; and this self-denial, which at first seemed so galling to nature, will become agreeable by my grace.

In the mean time, I require not that you arrive all at once at this perfect self-denial: no, by making it your daily endeavour you will advance insensibly; and with the help of my grace you will attain to it.

I must then, my God, resolve to do this! It is what you would have me to do. I will therefore immediately set about it. I desire to advance, and hope to continue to do so: but in this great work on what can I depend, but on your graces?

ON THE RULE.

LET us be convinced before God, that to arrive at the perfection of our state, the exact observance of our rules is at once the surest way, the shortest way, and the way which of all others is the most sublime and perfect.

1. The surest way. This God marked out to us with his own hand, and the Holy Ghost presided over it by his grace. In all other ways we are liable to illusions, snares, and mistakes: whereas being conducted by the rule, we are led by God's own hand; being inspired by the rule, we are enlightened by his purest lights; walking by the direction of the rule, we are sure to walk in the way of God: we neither need to fear our being deluded or led astray; this way is sure and infallible: let us therefore walk on with speed, and we shall unquestionably reach our end. To this God calls us, and waits for us there; but then it is by this way that he would have us to arrive at it.

2. It is the shortest way. A Religious Soul, inviolably faithful to the rule, advances more in a month by this way, than others do in a year by any other way. In observing the rule no time is lost, no one wanders astray, no one turns aside, every moment is turned to profit. This faithful observance procures us new graces every instant, and by means of these graces we advance every moment, and make new progress; the accessions which our virtue receives are multiplied without end; in a few years, in a few days, we may run over an immense career: Oh! how then will it be

be with a whole life entirely spent in this inviolable fidelity?

3. It is the way the most sublime and perfect. What constitutes our merit in the eyes of God, is not the greatness of the action, but the fervour of the soul, the perfection of the motive, the purity and sublimity of the intention. Now the observance of the rule procures and insures all these advantages. We are often in quest of holy practices, we run over books, and aim at high and extraordinary ways: but for your part, make it your care to keep your rule; faithfully to observe your rule. This is all God requires; this he approves, this he prizes and values extremely. Whatever you do besides this, it may be said to you: "Martha, Martha, sollicita es, & turbaris;" "You put yourself into a trouble and an agitation:" But in doing this, you will deserve to hear: "Maria optimam partem elegit: Mary has chosen the better part."

Wherefore leave others to run in those high and extraordinary ways; leave them to make themselves remarkable, to become daughters of sublime prayer and contemplation, the miracles and phœnixes of their times: but let it be your care to be obedient to your rule, most faithful observers of your rule in every point: this will guide you; this will sanctify and make you perfect; this will give you a distinguished place

in the heart and affections of your God. What more do you desire, but to do what is perfectly pleasing to your heavenly spouse?

O holy rule, how great do you appear in my eyes! How respectable shall you ever be to my mind! It is by you I design to go to God, I want no other way; this will lead me safely to him: and what can I desire more in this world? *Quicumque hanc regulam secuti fuerint, pax super illos: Those that shall follow this rule, shall taste the sweets of peace.* Gal. vi.

ON CONTEMNING SMALL FAULTS.

HOW unworthy is such a disposition of Almighty God! How great an obstacle to the sanctification of our souls!

1. Let us, in effect, consider the conduct of a soul, that is unfaithful in little things. She meets with an occasion of making a small sacrifice to God, her slate requires of her that she keep silence, obey at the sound of the clock, observe such a point of her rule, submit to ask some permission, conform herself to certain practices, to certain customs piously established: in a word, to practise some act of virtue, or to avoid some small fault. How then does she act? Why, overcome by sloth and negligence, she looks upon these smaller observances as things of no consequence; she treats them with

ON A CONTEMNING SMALL FAULTS. 43

with indifference and contempt, she passes them over without scruple; and pacifying her conscience, says to herself: This is but a small matter. Which is as much as to say to God: This fault will not damn me; and so long as I forfeit not your grace by mortal sin, that is enough for me: it is too great a restraint to be exact and faithful in all things. Her tongue indeed utters not these words, but it is the language of her conduct. Now how unworthy of God is such a way of thinking, more especially in a religious person; how injurious is it to his glory, how afflicting to his heart! With what eyes must he regard such a slothful, negligent, ungrateful soul, that can adopt such sentiments!

2. What an obstacle is such a disposition to the sanctification of our soul! For this voluntary fault how small soever it may be, really offends God; it wounds his fatherly heart, contristrates the Holy Ghost, tarnishes the lustre of sanctifying grace, and deprives us of many other graces.

We say these things are small; but they lead us to such as are great. Nothing is little, where God is concerned; and what can we do that is great in his eyes?

Little things, say you! But if we neglect these little matters, shall we be more faithful in greater? How many souls have perished

44 ON A CONTEMNING SMALL FAULTS.

rished in consequence of this negligence in little things!

Little things! God thinks them not such; nor shall we ourselves think them so, when we come to die.

Take great notice, Religious Souls, of what I am going to advance: though by a little fault we could convert the whole world, ward off the greatest calamities, and procure the greatest blessings; nay more; though we could release all the damned out of Hell, and place them in Heaven, it were better all should perish, and all be lost, than that we should save them by one venial sin, even the smallest: This is of faith.

How blind have I then been, O my God, with regard to this point! Had I rightly understood what little faults are in your eyes, should I have committed them so often, so easily, and in such numbers; and that too most commonly for trifles, through sloth, frailty, human respects, and merely for my own satisfaction? O strange infidelity! O monstrous ingratitude! how unworthy are you of a Christian Soul! But Oh! how horrible in a Religious person! May I die, O my God, may I rather die a thousand deaths, than become guilty of them any more, than ever more offend you deliberately. You have inspired me with this resolution at the foot of the Cross; support me

me then in putting it in practice and execution.

*Qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet:
He that contemns little things, shall fall by degrees:* Eccl. xix.

ON SILENCE.

RELIGIOUS Soul, be faithful to silence; the breaking of this rule is attended with worse consequences than you are apt to believe.

1. You speak, and distract yourself; you speak, and grace is silent; you speak, and you hear not God when he speaks to you. The less you shall speak to creatures, the more will God speak to your heart: seldom do you speak much, without having much to reproach yourself with: had you spoken less, how many faults, how many sorrows, how many reproaches of conscience would you have spared yourself! If we retrenched all the faults that are committed by the tongue, how much should we retrench of what we have to say in confession! My God, while so many teach us the art of speaking, who will teach us that of holding our tongue? Speak you to us, O Eternal Truth! and let all creatures be silent.

2. Silence well observed, is a great mark of regularity in a Religious House: then God abides there, an interior spirit reigns therein, and piety and its holy practices are held

held in esteem. On the contrary, a Religious House in which the rule of silence is ill observed, is a house from whence regularity is in a manner already banished, or, at best, where it will not be long kept up : of which experience is a doleful proof. Take silence out of a House, and recollection, an interior spirit, assiduous prayer and meditation, are no longer known: no one will turn her thoughts to God, no one will watch over herself, no one will have a supernatural end or motive either in her words or actions: the continual dissipation in which all live, fills their mind with a thousand frivolous objects, their life with a thousand impertinences, and of a House of God, makes it, as it were, a Secular House.

Let us entertain ourselves with God; our conversation with him will abundantly compensate our being deprived of that of creatures: this conversation is sweet, peaceful, holy and consoling: neither causing regret nor remorse. What fruit have we drawn from so much loss of time and so many unprofitable discourses, but much sorrow and regret?

3. Let us make it an inviolable rule to keep silence at all times and in all places, in which the rule ordains it: Silence in the Choir, never coming there to disturb the praises of God by our infidelities: Silence at our works, that we may not lose the me-

rit of them: Silence in the Refectory, seeing that good order and edification require it: Silence, in short, in every time and place, where it is particularly recommended. By this means, how many faults shall we avoid! What edifying example shall we constantly give and receive! It is said in the life of a great Saint, that when the clock gave the signal for silence, one might more easily have drawn blood out of his veins, than a single word from his mouth. How agreeable must this fidelity have been to you, my God! Hitherto alas! I have been a stranger to this punctual exactness; having been acquainted with the rule of silence only to break it: henceforward I promise you, O my God, to be more faithful. Now I understand what before I never sufficiently understood, that silence should be considered as the source of recollection and an interior life, the support of the rule, the soul of religion, and the solid foundation of the piety that should reign therein: the sacrifice of my tongue will follow that of my heart.

ON BEING PUNCTUAL AND EXACT.

1. **T**HREE are persons who seem to have acquired a right to be the last in all things; the hindmost at the Choir, at their works, at Chapter; who are always lagging behind, and making others to wait for

for them : one should be apt to think they were afraid of coming too soon, and of being tired with waiting for others. The signal is given, but they seem not to hear it ; the clock calls, but they rest very quiet : when they come all is begun, and perhaps pretty far advanced.

Whence come these loiterings and delays ? Is it owing to negligence, to indifference, to a slow and indolent nature ? for God forbid there should be reason to suspect, that it proceeds from contempt : this would be a grievous sin in the sight of God. Be that as it will, from whatever cause such negligence springs, it agrees very ill with regularity : in short, it is condemnable, and when habitual is still more culpable.

2. But why do they thus lag behind ? What motives, what excuse, have they, or can they have, for it ? Are they detained by weighty, essential, and indispensable business ? It is often for no reason at all ; the true cause is idleness, amusement, human respects, complaisance for some friend, some work to which they are too much attached, a visitor at the parlour, an entertaining conversation : nay perhaps, a trifle, a mere nothing, detains, employs, and amuses them. But do they understand, O my God, what evil they cause, what bad effects may follow and result from it ? In fact, it is disobeying God, it is giving bad example,

it

it is making themselves a kind of shew to the whole community : it is something one cannot express, something one would wish not to see, something one cannot observe without pain and regret, and what cannot be sufficiently deplored.

How is it that we are thus wanting to the rule, to obedience, to edification, and yet feel no remorse of conscience? How comes it, that we do not say interiorly to ourselves : what am I doing? Unfaithful wretch that I am! Is this my place? Is this my duty? God calls me, God expects me at the Choir ; others are singing his praises there, and here I am offending him ; I leave the Community, which is met in his presence, and united in his heart.

3. My God, I sighed when I saw the like behaviour in others ; and yourself was offended when you beheld it in me. Have I then bewailed it in myself? Have I condemned myself for it? Have I corrected my fault? Am I resolved never more to be guilty of it, never more to have it to answer for hereafter? Yes, my God, I promise you this, being sensible of its baneful effects; henceforth I will be punctually exact in all my exercises of piety, in following the Community, in the rule, in my office, in all my duties. By this constant exactness I will repair the faults I have committed, I will repair the bad example I have given,

and will at length accustom myself to act in all things by the great principles of the will of God, of fidelity to his grace, of obedience to his law, and of the prospect of eternity: this I will make the sure way of meriting it, and preparing myself for it.

Let us then be the foremost in all things, that we may receive the first fruits of God's blessings. *Stellæ vocatæ dixerunt, adsumus: The Stars were called, and they said: Here we are.* Baruc. iii.

ON THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

WHOM can express the inestimable advantages which the presence of God affords us, what state soever we be in? The remembrance of a God, who is ever present with us, furnishes us with the greatest motives of fervour: it is the soul of all virtues, and the source of all good.

1. God's presence is a motive of fear to preserve us from sin. Ah! who would resolve to commit sin, if he reflected that he is under the eyes of God? No, said the chaste Susanna, I cannot offend God in his presence. So shall we also say, in the different occasions of sin into which we may fall: may Heaven preserve me from offending my God! He sees me, he hears me; and Oh! may punish and revenge himself on me the very moment I commit it; or at least may withdraw himself from me, and give

give me up to my own weakness, and to the almost inevitable danger of falling from fault to fault, from small to great, and from one abyss to another still deeper. No, I will no more displease my God before his eyes; if I feared not his vengeance, I ought at least to fear his awful looks.

2. God's presence is a motive of fervour in all our actions. God is witness to every action I perform; when I do it for him, how ought I to acquit myself of it? If I do it with sloth and negligence, will he vouchsafe to receive and accept of my homage? Shall I not have just reason to dread that terrible curse which he has pronounced: Cursed be he who does the work of God negligently! All my actions shall be performed with diligence, fervour, and a pure intention: not content to act for God, I will strive to act in all things in a manner that is worthy of God, and to offer him an incense that may be agreeable to his eyes. *Walk before me, says the Lord, and be perfect: Ambula coram me, & esto perfectus.* Gen. xvii.

3. God's presence is a motive of consolation under all my sufferings. I suffer indeed, I sigh, I groan, and am in a state of affliction; but God knows it; God sees and is touched with it; he is here with me, nothing of what I endure escapes his eye, and his regards are tender and paternal:

he will uphold me by his grace under all my grievances, nay perhaps he will mercifully deliver me from them in his infinite goodness. But if it be his will still to leave me in my grief and sufferings, let his holy will be done; provided he be with me, and I with him, I am comforted.

Though the whole world were to forsake me, though hell should furiously rage against me, while I combat for God, under the eyes of God, what can either the world or the devil do against me?

4. God's presence is a motive for keeping ourselves recollect in all places, at all times, and in every circumstance of life. Alas! do we so much as think of it? We are always present with God, and God is often not present to us. God is ever near us, and frequently we are at a distance from God: our mind is dissipated, our imagination is wandered astray, our senses are poured out, all the powers of our soul are wandering and roving about. O then let us call to mind God's presence, which will soon bring us back to ourselves, soon settle our minds, and fix our wandering thoughts: thus we shall recover that recollection, which it behoved us never to lose.

My God, I will keep myself constantly in your divine presence, I will fear the least thing that may draw me out of it; when out of it, I will immediately return to you; abandon

abandon me not, nor suffer me to forget you. Vivit Dominus, in cuius conspectu
sto: *I am always under the eyes of the living God.* 3 King. xvii.

THE SPIRIT OF RETIREMENT AND
RECOLLECTION.

1. **R**ELOIOUS Soul, if you sincerely desire to give yourself to God, be a friend to retirement and recollection; make your *cell*-your favourite abode: next to the holy Altars, nothing is so sweet and comfortable as this quiet retreat, where removed from noise, and a bustling empty world, you will employ your thoughts on the great objects of faith. Make a secret oratory of your heart, in which, between God and you, you may learn to forego a multitude of things, the unprofitableness of which is the smallest evil to be feared from them. Let your life be hidden, retired, and estranged from that spirit of the world, which sometimes insinuates itself into the most regular communities.

2. An interior soul lives in retirement as in her centre. She makes it her refuge and her delight; there she finds peace, there she finds grace, there she finds her God: and her God is sufficient for her; to her he supplies the place of the whole world together. This is what we more especially find during the time of our yearly retreats.

what peace do we then experience, what interior comforts, how much regret for past infidelities, how many good resolutions and holy desires for the time to come !

We are then quite different creatures, our mind and heart are entirely changed : and what is it that makes this happy change, but the silence, the recollection, and the perfect retirement in which we live at those times.

3. Your safest asylum, Religious Soul, is retirement and recollection, and the privacy of your chamber ; let nothing but necessity or charity draw you out of it. From Heaven to the Cell the distance is but small, says St. Bernard ; it is a paradise on earth in your regard.

The Saints are impeccable in Heaven ; being constantly united to God, they enjoy an unchangeable peace and joy, which nothing can rob them of. So in proportion, a Religious Soul, shut up in her cell, at a distance from the conversation of creatures, and all commerce with the world, finds herself, as it were, in a state of impeccability, and tastes such sweets, as may, in some sort, be compared with those of the Blessed : she lives in such peace of conscience and tranquility of mind as nothing can disturb. Labour, O my Soul, to attain to this ; the only way that leads to it, is recollection, the love of retirement, the keeping of strict

strict silence, a total separation of mind and heart from all that is not God: this is the only way to maintain our fervour, to unite ourselves clearly to God, to establish ourselves in this happy state, to be filled with the unction of grace, and fed with the heavenly manna; to taste, in a word, during this life, those holy delights, the torrents of which are reserved for the kingdom of Heaven. Lead me, O God, into this holy solitude, where you desire to speak to my heart: my only desire is to hear your voice, and to shew myself docile to your divine lessons.

THE SPIRIT OF PENANCE.

PENANCE is necessary for every sinner: penance should be proportioned to the greatness of our sins: penance should be lasting as life, after falling into sin.

1. Penance is necessary after falling into sin. It is only by penance that sin can be repaired: sin is a mortal wound which nothing but penance can close; it is a deep abyss into which we are fallen, and out of which penance alone can draw us; it is a destructive turning away from God, from our duty and last end, to which only penance can bring us back.

The rigors of penance are painful, but its effects are wholesome and salutary: it restores

restores us to God and to his grace, it replaces us in his fatherly heart, withdraws us from his anger and vengeance, and gives us access to the throne of his mercy. After having had the misfortune to fall into sin, we have no other way of salvation; either repentance or reprobation; either repentance or hell-fire; either sincere repentance, or eternal damnation.

2. Penance must be proportioned to the greatness of our sins: the more grievous these are, the severer must be our penance; the more numerous our sins are, the more extensive must be our penance; the measure of the one must be the measure of the other: a mortal wound can only be healed by painful remedies.

If we have committed great sins, if the heart has yielded to irregular desires, if we have lived in a holy state in a manner that is far from being holy, if we have abused the most precious graces, violated the most sacred obligations, have something more to reproach ourselves with than our negligence in frequenting the sacraments: Great God, God infinitely holy! What an outrage have we offered to you! What a calamity have we brought on ourselves! Seeing this, and being sensible what we have done, to what practices of penance, to what rigors of penance, should we not condemn ourselves? and how great, how severe,

vere, how rigorous soever our penance may be, will it ever equal the injury done to God? Alas! a single mortal sin is deserving of hell, what then should be the penance, which must supply its place, and preserve us from it? Without your merits and your atonement, adorable Saviour, what would become of us?

3. Penance should be as lasting as life itself, when sin has been committed; because we shall never know whether our sin has been forgiven: and because, though we were assured of having obtained pardon, we should still continually fear our relapsing into it: it is only by continually doing penance that we can preserve ourselves from it. Moreover, if a Religious Soul be duly affected towards her God, her Benefactor, and her Heavenly Spouse, should not her having offended him, even so much as once, be to her a just cause to grieve all the rest of her life? Can she ever be consoled for having been unfaithful to the most affectionate of all Spouses? This single thought, I have offended, I have outraged my God, should certainly suffice to induce her to spend all her days in mourning and sorrow, and consequently to do penance as long as she lives. Yes, if she loves her God, her grief and tears will never cease: a sword of sorrow has pierced her heart, and she will carry it un-

to the grave, thinking herself happy to do penance in this world, that she may find mercy in the next.

My God ! the victim stands at the foot of the Cross, sacrifice it as suits your justice, but yet forget not your tender mercies : Cor contritum & humiliatum, &c. Psalm cl.

M E D I T A T I O N .

WE must practise it constantly, we must practise it at the time and place appointed, and in a manner worthy of God.

1. Mental prayer is one of the most necessary and essential exercises of a religious life : all Founders of Orders have recommended it extremely, all the Saints have constantly given themselves to it, all faithful Souls have ever made it their occupation, their comfort, and their delight. Mental prayer is a source of lights, of graces and strength ; it is the food of the soul, our comfort under trials and crosses, our refuge in time of temptation, the principle and source of an interior life, of perfection and union with God. Without the spirit of mental prayer a Religious Person will never have the spirit of her state, nor an interior spirit, nor the spirit of God : her life will be nothing but dissipation, imperfection, and sloth ; all her actions will be without merit or fruit ; all her conduct will be filled with faults, imperfections and failures.

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Without the spirit of mental prayer a Religious will be in a manner wholly secular, profane, and half a worldling. Is this, adorable Saviour, to be the faithful spouse whom you have chosen? In this condition how shall she fulfil the duties of her state? How labour to become perfect? Can she ever believe herself to be in the way of salvation, or have any confidence that she complies with her engagements?

2. It is not enough to meditate, but we must do it at the time and place appointed, that is, in the Choir: thither God would have us to go, thither our rule calls us, and holy custom conducts us thither: it is as it were the sanctuary to which we repair to offer our homages to God, meeting with one accord in his holy presence to receive his graces, as the Apostles met in the upper room to receive the Holy Ghost.

Wherever else we keep our meditation, we can have no assurance that it will be so powerful, so efficacious, so agreeable to God; seeing that Christ himself tells us: *where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* She that leaves the Choir, and separates herself from her Sisters without reason, will not be looked upon by God with an eye of complacency: he looked for her there, and there he had prepared his graces for her. Further, our meditation must be made,

made, as far as we can, at the time appointed for the Community : when we put it off, we commonly stand a chance either to omit it wholly, or at least in part. This is what we learn to our cost by sad experience.

3. In fine, we must make it in a manner that is worthy of God. I make it indeed, but alas ! my God, how do I do it ? have I made it with a lively faith, with a holy respect, with interior recollection and attention, with application of mind and fervour of heart ? Holy dispositions, how much do I wish for you ! but alas ! how remote are you from me ! I say no more, O my God, on this head ! I have nothing more to do but to sigh, to humble and correct myself : I hope from your grace what I cannot expect from my own fidelity. Teach me, my God, to pray, and to pray well ; to pray with humility, attention, fervour and constancy : let mental prayer be my consolation, and then it will contribute to my perfection : I promise you, at least, not to be failing in it for the future. I have already but too much to reproach myself with on this essential point. Domine, doc me nos orare : *Lord, teach us how to pray.* Marc. xi.

FOR A DAY'S RETREAT EVERY MONTH.

If we would make this retreat with profit, there are three things to be observed: the necessity, the method, and the advantages.

1. The necessity. Religious Houses are commonly composed of fervent, slothful, and sometimes of irregular members. In all these states there is need of often entering into ourselves: the perfect must do it, that they may persevere: the tepid, that they may acquire more fervour: and the irregular, that they may return into the way which they had forsaken.

A Religious Life comprises so many, and such extensive duties, that it is rare and difficult, after a certain time, not to be exposed to fall into some relaxation: we may purpose and make resolutions, we may take measures for maintaining our fervour; and notwithstanding all this, such is our frailty that there is room to fear left by little and little our natural weakness bear us down, or at least diminish and cool the fervour of our charity. It is therefore a thing of importance, nay, almost absolutely necessary, to enter more seriously into ourselves, in order to observe what defects have stolen into our conduct and behaviour, and what there is in us that may occasion our falling still further and further into negligence and tepidity;

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that so we may awake out of that drowsiness and lethargy into which we are fallen, and the consequences whereof may become still more dangerous. In short, that we may put ourselves in the state in which we should be glad to be, were we soon to appear before God's tribunal.

These ends and motives are doubtless very cogent and efficacious to inspire us with a wholesome desire of this holy practice, which is accordingly made use of in most Religious Communities: and such souls as aspire to the perfection of their state, fail not to procure themselves this help and succour, to which God usually annexes very pious graces. Such are the reasons that should prevail on us to make these sort of retreats, either to prevent our falling into sin, or to recover us when fallen, or at least to maintain us in virtue, and make us advance more and more in the paths of justice.

2. The method of making them. This, Religious Soul, is the manner in which you should endeavour to spend this holy day.

1. Choose a day in the month in which you may be more free and at your own disposal, that you may consecrate it in a more special manner to the great business of your salvation.

2. So order matters the evening before, that the following day you may be entirely and

and solely employed in the great work which you have at heart.

3. During that day you shall make three meditations, in which you must chiefly insist on these three points: 1. On the graces you have received during this month, and the use you have made of them. 2. On the sins you have committed, that you may grieve for and repair them. The third meditation is always consecrated to a preparation for a good death, which is the most essential exercise of this retreat.

4. You shall further add a consideration on the manner in which you perform all your actions, especially those that relate to your spiritual exercises, the frequenting of the sacraments, and the observance of your rules.

5. It will be proper this day, with the advice of your Confessor, to take a general review of all the faults you have committed during the month: all these faults, being collected under one point of view, will more powerfully excite you to sorrow and compunction.

6. You will offer your communion by way of viaticum, and with the same sentiments and dispositions as you would desire to have, when you receive it at the end of your life.

7. Above all, you will make the acts that are preparative to a good death,

which, as I said before, is the most essential point of this day's retreat.

8. It is another weighty point, to make choice of the subject for your particular examen during the following month, whether it be a virtue you desire to practise more in particular, or some vice which you are more desirous to overcome.

Lastly, You will end the day with a visit to the holy sacrament, whither you will go to offer to God, and to lay at the foot of the cross, the resolutions you shall have made, and to beg grace to keep them.

3. Its advantages. The advantages of this holy exercise are without number.

1. We learn still more and more to know ourselves: this knowledge makes a part of the science of the Saints.

2. We examine the state we are in before God, and no longer expose ourselves to fall into illusion or blindness, which are so much to be apprehended in the exercises of an interior life.

3. If we are grown remiss and tepid, we embrace the means to rise again, and prevent the evil from growing worse, and becoming almost incurable, by unhappily gaining ground upon us.

4. If any fault or defect had滑ed into our confessions, whether by want of contrition, or of a firm resolution of amendment,
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this general review of the month repairs all before God.

5. We put ourselves in a state not to be surprised by an unprovided death, should God suffer any of those accidents to befall us which are so common in the world.

6. This retreat is also a means of rekindling our fervour, and animating us more and more to advance in perfection.

In fine, this holy practice, duly complied with, will draw upon us God's graces, and dispose us to receive them, as a soil well prepared receives the dew of Heaven.

ON FREQUENTING THE SACRAMENTS.

1. **O**F all the exercises of religion there is none whose use is of greater importance, and more worthy of our reflections, than that which relates to the frequenting of the sacraments. It is our happiness to approach to them often, and this is one of the greatest advantages, one of the sweetest consolations, of our state; the main point is to approach to them worthily, and with the holy dispositions which they require.

2. It sometimes happens that we have great fears and difficulty to approach in frequenting the sacraments; we apprehend we abuse them, when we consider the little fruit we draw from them. On one side, we must not carry our fears too far; but

then, on the other, it may sometimes happen that they are but too well grounded. Indeed frequently to have recourse to the sacred tribunal of confession, and to the holy table, and still to be almost always the same; to see scarce any fruit, any change, any amendment of life; but little silence and recollection; but little mortification and an interior spirit: truly, if we reflect seriously on this before God, have we not reason to fear, that if we do not profane them, when we approach, we at least put some obstacle to the abundant fruits, which we might and ought to draw from them?

3. But under these fears and difficulties which we feel, must we resolve to keep from them? God forbid we should! This would be the greatest misfortune that could befall us; and what can a soul gain by thus keeping at a distance from her God, but only to neglect herself, to go still more and more astray from him, insensibly to lose sight of him, and to expose herself to the danger of perishing eternally? It is therefore neither God nor the sacraments that we must abandon: but what we must forsake is precisely this, viz. our negligences, our infidelities, our sentiments that have too much of nature in them, our readiness to transgress our rules, our attachments to crea-

creatures, our ease and conveniences, in a word, ourselves.

We never abuse the sacraments, when being constant and faithful to approach to them on the days ordained by the rule, we habitually labour to be exact in our duties, faithful to our rules, edifying in our comportment: in short, when sincerely desirous to unite ourselves to God, we go to him with a true spirit of humility, and with confidence and love.

It is then my duty to sound my heart upon this important head, and to examine well with what dispositions I ought to partake of the divine mysteries for the time to come. On this I will make the most serious reflections in your presence, O my God! For with regard to the sacraments I ought to fear both the one and the other of these extremes, either to abstain from them through negligence, or to approach to them with little or no good dispositions. The wise medium I therefore propose to take, shall be to approach often to them worthily with the help of your grace: this is the great maxim from which I will never more depart.

ON CONFESSION.

1. **T**O dispose yourself for a good confession, consider in the first place the greatness of the action you are going to perform, and of which there is question between God and you.

You are going to place yourself at the foot of the Cross, in quality of a sinner and a penitent, there to bewail your sins and infidelities to God.

You are going to present yourself before your Sovereign Judge, to give him an account of your actions, and to prepare yourself beforehand for your last judgment.

You are going to cleanse your soul from all its stains, and thus to render it more agreeable to the eyes of your God.

You are going to receive the effects of the adorable blood of Jesus Christ, whose merits are to be applied to you by the grace of the sacrament. You are going, in a word, to receive one sacrament, and to prepare yourself for another: by a good confession, to prepare yourself for a worthy communion; and after seeking the warrant and pledge of your reconciliation in one, to find that of your predestination in the other.

These great truths, seriously ruminated upon before God, must needs excite the highest sentiments in your soul.

2. Con-

2. Confession is painful in itself and in what it demands of us : being a tribunal of justice and rigour, it is painful in the examination we must make of our conscience, that we may know ourselves ; painful in the humble confession we must make of our faults, that we may make ourselves known ; and painful in the dispositions we must bring along with us, namely, a serious examen, a bitter grief and compunction, and a sincere and efficacious purpose to sin no more. Yet this confession, which is so painful on one hand, is highly comfortable on the other. The soul that has recourse to it, came perhaps an enemy to God, deprived of his grace, an object of his wrath, covered with the leprosy of sin, a slave of the devil, and worthy of the eternal pains of hell : by the grace of the sacrament the soul recovers the friendship of her God, is adorned with all the lustre of his grace, becomes an object of the affection and complacency of her Maker ; and were she to die in this state, she would be sure to possess him eternally. But if we are so happy as to go to confession in the state of grace, what precious advantages do we not reap from it ! We obtain a greater purity of conscience, a new augmentation of graces, and a new right to glory ; we become more and more united to God, acquire fresh strength
and

and vigour, in a word, we put ourselves in dispositions that qualify us to become spouses still more worthy of the heart and regards of the Heavenly Bridegroom.

3. In order to enter into your designs, O my God, and to qualify myself to receive your graces in the sacrament of penance;

1. I will, with my Confessor's advice, regulate the time of my confessions; and this time being once regulated, I will be exact to it, without ever failing.

2. I will always prepare myself for my confessions, and will take care never to make them by custom.

3. The night before I will prepare myself for it by some particular prayer, by some practice of mortification and penance.

4. I will never go without a spirit of compunction, of respect, and exterior and interior recollection: after coming away, I will endeavour to preserve these holy sentiments.

5. When the Priest shall pronounce the sacred words of absolution, I will no more be taken up with finding out my sins, but only with detesting and grieving for them; and I will receive absolution as if the blood of Jesus Christ was falling upon my soul.

In fine, my God, I will make all my confessions as I should be glad to have made them when I come to die.

MEANS TO EXCITE US TO CONTRITION
BEFORE CONFESSiON.

1. O Penitent and Religious Soul, I place you at the foot of the cross of your adorable Saviour; and there prostrating yourself in a spirit of faith, make these reflections. If a beloved spouse saw her tender consort given up to the greatest sufferings, to the pains of death, his head drooping under the violence of his torments, his eyes swimming in tears and blood, his body mangled and torn, and quite covered with ghastly wounds; could she endure this sight, this bloody spectacle, without feeling her own heart pierced and broken with the most sensible sorrow?

But if this spouse were herself the cause of the sufferings and death of this darling husband; if she had contributed to reduce him to this doleful state, could she support the excess of her sorrow?

2. Now behold, O you that was once a sinner, but are now a penitent, behold your own situation, behold your own handiwork. Yes, it is you, it is you yourself, who by your sins and infidelities, have reduced Jesus Christ, your heavenly spouse, to this sad and deplorable state: your sins were the cause of his torments, your sins have spilt his blood, your sins have nailed him to the cross, and condemned him to this cruel ignominious

nominious death! And though you had not caused his sufferings and barbarous death by any grievous sins, is it not a sufficient subject of grief to you, that by venial sins and deliberate faults you have increased his sufferings, opened anew his wounds, and added to the bitterness of his chalice? This, however, is what you have done, this is what you have to reproach yourself with, and what you should deplore in the bitterness of your heart, if your heart be capable of any feelings.

3. Now let me ask you, have you need of any thing more, or have you need of so much, to excite you to a true, sincere, and most feeling sorrow? Ah! my God, my adorable Saviour, should you say to him, it is then I who by my sins have reduced you to this woful state; my sins, my infidelities, my ingratitudes and negligences, these have opened your wounds, and augmented your sorrows. At this afflicting thought, how can I but grieve at your feet, how can I but melt into tears, pour forth sighs, and die with grief with you and for you?

Oh! Why cannot I this moment wash my sins with my tears, drown them in my blood, and expire in your presence, through the vehemency of my sorrow? Let, O God, let one slender drop of that ocean of deep

deep affliction flow into my heart, with which your own was overwhelmed.

In these holy dispositions, in these sentiments of compunction, go, Penitent Soul, and present yourself at the sacred tribunal; then will your soul be prepared for the reception of grace, and your Heavenly Spouse will again receive you into his heart, which your sorrow shall have touched and soothed. *Cor contritum & humiliatum, Deus, non despicias.* Psalm. cl.

THE EXCELLENCE OF COMMUNION.

FAITHFUL Spouse of Jesus Christ, we can present you with nothing more worthy, more holy, or more grand, than the words of Jesus Christ himself concerning this sacrament of his adorable body and blood; which are as follows: "This is the Bread of Life which cometh down from Heaven; my Flesh is meat indeed; and my Blood is drink indeed: He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, abideth in me, and I in him. Your Fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead. He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, hath everlasting life."

On these great words and unchangeable truths make these salutary reflections.

1. Consider that the adorable body of Jesus Christ is indeed the heavenly food, and his precious blood the drink of immortality, that should nourish and support you in this place of banishment: that this adorable sacrament is the bread that cometh down from Heaven, the bread of Angels, the delicious manna that should satisfy our hungry souls in the desert of this life, the heavenly banquet to which we are invited even preferably to the Angels: Oh! How precious must be our souls in the eyes of God! How dear must our sanctification be to his loving heart!

2. Consider, That by means of the holy Communion Jesus Christ abideth in us, and we in him, that he comes into us, unites himself to us, and operates in us: so that it is no longer we that live, but Jesus Christ himself that liveth and breatheth in us. Should we ever have thought such a miracle possible, if God in his infinite wisdom and goodness had not effected it in the days of his great mercy?

3. Call to mind that a worthy Communion not only becomes an abundant source of all heavenly graces in this life, but also gives us a pledge and foretaste of that blessed immortality to which we aspire. The ancient Patriarchs only eat an earthly and transitory manna; but we receive the hea-

heavenly manna, and in it a pledge of a glorious immortality.

4. But at the same time let us remember, with fear and trembling, that an unworthy and sacrilegious Communion is at once the greatest of crimes, and the greatest misfortune that can befall a soul: she thereby becomes guilty of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, she eats and drinks judgment to herself, and profanes what is most grand and sacred in religion.

At the sight of this crime Faith is alarmed, Religion trembles, and the Angels are thrown into consternation.

O my Soul! turn your eyes from such a scene of horror, and let us only think of making ourselves worthy of the inexpressible happiness of a holy Communion, by bringing with us the dispositions which this adorable sacrament requires of us.

THE DESIRE OF COMMUNION, OR FREQUENT COMMUNION.

1. ONE of the things that should give you a greater love and respect for your holy state is, that it is your happiness to have it in your power to communicate often, and to unite yourself to your heavenly Spouse. He himself invites and presses, and gives you tokens of the strongest desire to unite himself to you, to impart to you his gifts, and to offer you a distinguished

guished place in his heart : what more can he do to assure you of all this, than to give himself to you, and to give you in himself an abundant source of all graces, of all good things, and of all heavenly favours? On seeing this, how great should be the desire, the eagerness, the ardour and holy transport of a faithful spouse, to unite herself to her heavenly Bridegroom? Should she not sigh after this grace every moment of her life? Should not every sentiment and affection of her heart carry her to this ineffable happiness?

2. Consider, therefore, and be duly sensible before God, how sad and how blameable a thing it is in a Religious Soul, to be failing through her own fault in the Communions of her Rule, and voluntarily, and by her own choice, to abstain from them. For what motive can put her upon doing this? What is commonly the cause of it, but negligence, sloth and tepidity? and what does she do thereby?

She deprives herself of the greatest graces; she gives proof of a culpable coldness and indifference for her Heavenly Spouse; she disedifies her Sisters; exposes herself to fall more and more into negligence, disgust and sloth; renounces a precious means of sanctification and perfection; authorizes, by her example, tepid souls to abstain from

it, and, with grief let us say it, she deprives herself of the greatest of all graces.

Were then the foolish Virgins more blameable in the sight of God? We are afraid of having an account to give of the Communions we make, but fear not the account we must give of those we refuse to make.

It may be that the Communion which you fail to make, is that in which God has prepared for you the greatest graces. Ah! did you but know the gifts of God, and the designs of mercy he had upon you!

3. What then does a Religious Soul owe to God with regard to the holy Communion? What does she owe to her State? What does she owe to herself? To make it a law with herself to be inviolably faithful in this point, never to be failing in the Communions of the Rule without essential reasons, and to repair for the future those she has been failing in.

I have found, my God, by sad experience, that when we abstain from Communion, we are not the better for it; that when one keeps away, it is through tepidity and negligence; that the oftener we put it by, the oftener we would do so; and that after deferring it for a while, we have much more difficulty to resolve upon it. I know indeed that to begin again to frequent it, a preparation must be made, and that we

must live a regular life: this, my God, is what I am resolved to do! My state obliges me to it; your grace is promised me, and I will endeavour to make myself worthy of it. You yourself will prepare my heart for the happiness you vouchsafe to offer me.

P R E P A R A T I O N F O R C O M M U N I O N , O R
F E R V E N T C O M M U N I O N .

WOULD you learn, Religious Soul, which is the best, the most sure, the most solid and perfect way, of preparing yourself for the grace of Communion, that so you may never make but such as are good, salutary to yourself, agreeable to God, and worthy of the sanctity of the sacrament? It is this; carefully put it in constant practice.

1. Make a remote preparation. Strive to live with great regularity, interiorly recollected, faithful to God's grace, and exact in all the duties of your state. Shun all voluntary and deliberate faults, and have a sincere desire of your sanctification. If as yet you are not in so perfect a state, labour at least to tend to it; and to come as near it as you can. On your beginning to enter upon it, dispose yourself by little and little to advance therein, and insensibly to make new progress.

2. Make

2. Make a more immediate preparation. After purifying your soul in confession bring to Communion these three holy dispositions,

A lively faith, so as to be penetrated with the truth, the sanctity, the majesty and grandeur of this adorable sacrament; and inspired with humility, respect, veneration, and a holy annihilation of yourself, at the sight of the God you are going to receive.

A great purity of heart, that retrenches from it all that can displease the eyes of your heavenly Spouse, and obstruct his grace.

An ardent desire to receive him; a desire that is animated with a still more ardent love. In effect, how should you but ardently desire to receive the Holy of Holies, and in him the source of all graces?

3. Bring with you another disposition, which is still more perfect and worthy of God. In order to this, consider well how great is the work, or rather how great the prodigy which the holy Sacrament is going to operate in your soul; I mean that sacred union which you are going to cement between your soul and Jesus Christ. Yes, you are going to join yourself to him by an union the most holy, the most intimate, the most salutary and consoling: in a word, by a sacramental union that is altogether heavenly.

venly and divine : insomuch that according to the fine saying of St. Cyril, you will form but one and the same body and blood with Jesus Christ himself: *Concorporei & Consanguinei.*

You in particular, as the Spouse of Jesus Christ, will be united to him by a still more intimate and ineffable union ; and you, above all, should say with St. Paul : *I live, not I, but Jesus Christ liveth in me : Jesus Christ breathes and reigns in my breast.*

O my God, do we rightly understand the grandeur of religion, the happiness it procures us, the glory to which it raises us, the unspeakable wonders it operates in us by means of the holy Eucharist ? We believe and adore them, and yet we do not ardently aspire after the grace of this Sacrament ! and yet we are not inflamed with a glowing ardour to receive our God ! and yet we prostrate not ourselves continually before the foot of his altar, surrounding the holy table, sighing after this inexpressible happiness, and constantly preparing ourselves to feed on the bread of Angels ! O hunger, O thirst after justice ! what is become of you ? Where is our faith ? Vouchsafe, O God, to animate it, and it will animate all these sentiments in our hearts.

THE

THE DIVINE OFFICE.

RELIGIOUS Communities are under an obligation of saying the Divine Office: this they know, this they fulfil, this no one is tempted to neglect; all the difficulty consists in the manner of saying it, and acquitting themselves of it.

As many difficulties may occur relating to this point, I here present you with some wholesome advice concerning it.

1. Be punctual and faithful in saying your Office according to the spirit of your Rule, considering it as your duty, your comfort and glory, whereby you pay to God the homage of your heart and lips, sing his praises, adore his greatness, do what the Angels do in Heaven, and, united in spirit with the Ministers of the living God, pray in the name of the whole Church: nay more, you pray with Jesus Christ himself, who prays in you, with you, and for you.

2. Say your Office in the Choir; thither you are called by grace, custom, your rule, and your duty; there God prepares for you his special favour. Without a good and lawful reason never dispense with yourself from this duty, never separate yourself from the company of the just souls, whose fervour will supply your own want of devotion. If it be the custom to sing the Divine Office, contribute to it as far

as you can, and leave not to others the whole labour and glory of it.

3. With regard to the manner of saying your office, attention is the principal thing which comprises all the rest.

Now attention is twofold, actual and virtual. Actual attention is when you actually reflect on the action which you are employed in. Virtual attention is that which still continues in virtue of the first with which you began, and which you have not retracted. Virtual attention is sufficient, since God requires not that you renew this actual and express attention every moment, but considers it as still subsisting in your intention: only from time to time, and, above all, when you perceive yourself to be distracted, recollect your thoughts, and turn them quietly and without trouble to God.

During the Office one may give attention to three things: we may attend in general to God, to whom we speak, and in whose presence we are; we may attend to the words which we pronounce; for though we do not understand them, God understands them, and sees the heart; we may attend to the greatness and the sanctity of the action we are doing: which being holy and agreeable to God, we endeavour to perform it as its nature and spirit requires: God demands no more.

4. This

4. This essential point being fixed and explained, do not you, who are faithful, yet too often uneasy and troubled, do not you, after this, cast yourself into difficulties and perplexities, nor bewilder yourself in doubts and uncertainties. I have been distracted, say you, must I repeat my Office? I gave not due attention to such a part, must I therefore begin it again? I remember not to have said this or that, I am in doubt and uneasiness, what must I do.--You must be obedient, and keep to what God's Minister has no doubt said to you more than once: lay aside your uneasinesses, and your reflections on what you have said. Go on in God's presence, begging pardon for your faults, and promising to be more faithful and attentive for the future. We often distract ourselves by striving to keep our attention, and we stifle our devotion by endeavouring to renew it.

PRACTICES.

1. BEFORE you begin your Office, offer to God your intention, and direct it wholly to his glory.
2. When you find yourself distracted, bring back your thoughts to God, and put yourself quietly in his presence.
3. When the other side of the Choir say their part, you need not pronounce it;

it

it suffices that you hear and unite yourself to them.

4. You have forgot or missed saying some words, go on with the Choir, without stopping at what you have omitted; to do this, instead of one fault, would be committing two, by your hurrying to come up with the rest.

In fine, remembering that you perform the function of Angels, join your homages with their adorations.

THE OBLIGATION WE ARE UNDER OF
LOVING GOD.

1. **T**HOU shalt love the Lord thy God. Diliges. This is the first, the most essential, and the most indispensable of all the commandments; which comprises, animates, and perfects all the other precepts, and without the fulfilling of which all the rest are insufficient. God created us that we may love him sincerely in time, and may thus be qualified to love him perfectly to all eternity. God has given us a heart only that we may love him; and if this heart loves him not, it is unworthy to live. If we do not love God, we do not live; for in the sight of God we only live on love and by love: consequently a soul that does not love him is dead in his sight. If we love not God in this world, we shall never see

see him in the next. If then we should happen to die without this holy love, it had been better for us never to have been born, to have been extinct in our mother's womb, and never to have seen the light of the sun. In short, there is no medium for us; either we must love God in this world, or be eternally miserable in the next: either we must burn with the heavenly flames of divine love on earth, or be devoted for ever with the avenging flames of hell.

2. My God, need you then to command us to love you, and to threaten us with your just vengeance, if we do not love you? Is there any need of commanding a son to love his father, a spouse to love her husband, a friend to love his friend? You are our Father, and the most affectionate of fathers; you are our Friend, and the sincerest of friends; you are the Heavenly Spouse of our souls, and the only one worthy of all our affection. Is it not enough that you suffer us to love you? Can our hearts find an object more deserving of their love? Is it not our highest happiness to love you? and our sovereign evil, yea the very extremity of evils, not to love you? No, my God, command me no more with menaces to love you, as if you mistrusted my heart: bid me love you because it is your will, and because you are deserving of it. It is our-duty, O God, our glory, our

comfort, our happiness, and all our delight,
to love you.

3. But if all the world should love you,
O God, with how much more reason should
they do it, whom you have chosen, distin-
guished, and consecrated in a special man-
ner to be your favourite spouses, and the
objects of your love? I have the happiness
to be of this number; I consider this as one
of the most precious of graces; and learn
from thence that I am more strictly and in-
dispensably bound to love you, to love you
ardently, to love you alone, to be attached
to nothing but you, to live and breathe
only for you: this I desire, this I ask of
you, this is the only thing I wish for in the
world---Let me love you; O my God!
let me love you; let me live only to love
you, let me live only by your love! Behold
my heart, O keep it for ever in your own.
Diligam te, Domine, fortitudo mea.
Psalms xvii.

IN WHAT MANNER WE SHOULD LOVE
GOD.

THOU shalt love the Lord thy God with
all thy mind, with all thy heart, and with
all thy strength! Such is the spirit, the ex-
tent, the measure of the precept of loving
God, to love him without measure.

The practice of it this:

1. To

1. To love God with our whole mind is often to think of him, to be always employed upon him, to walk continually in his divine presence, and, as far as may be, never to lose sight of him; it is to meditate on his greatness, his goodness, his beauty, his infinite loveliness; to lose one's self in the immense ocean of his adorable perfections; to unite one's self with the holy Angels, who contemplate him without ceasing in the splendour of his glory; it is, at least, often to call him to mind, and to shun as much as we can the idea and tumult of such vain thoughts as only occasion distractions; that we may be occupied and filled with God alone. We willingly think of what we love; can we then forget the Lord our God, who is the only object worthy of our love?

2. To love God with our whole heart, is to love him as God, that is, sovereignly and above all things, preferably to all things, and universally in all; it is to love him without partner or rival, without reserve or division, giving place in our heart to nothing earthly or human, to nothing low and groveling, to nothing foreign and superfluous; neither to affection, nor tie, nor desire, nor pursuit, nor to any attachment to creatures, that may dispute it with our Maker; sacrificing every inclination to flesh and blood that is too natural, so far as to hate the world, and even to hate ourselves.

with an holy hatred, as says our Lord, that we may love him alone, love all things in him, all things for him, and less than him; since without him all besides is nothing to us. Happy, O my God, is the heart which is thus consecrated to you!

3 To love God with our whole strength, is to be so generously disposed with regard to God, that being animated with his holy love, we are ready to make the greatest sacrifices, to surmount all the repugnances of our own self-love, to combat our passions, to extirpate the very root of our vices, to offer the greatest violences to ourselves, to gain the greatest victories over ourselves; and, on occasions, courageously to pass over all difficulties, all obstacles, and, if needful, to run through thorns and precipices, and even through fire and flames, to testify our love for God, and the ardent desire we have to preserve, increase, and perfect it in us without ceasing. Thus did the Saints, the Solitaries, the Confessors, and Virgins, love him, and, above all, the holy Martyrs, who spilt their blood in testimony of their love.

Such is the manner we must love God, if we would love him as God should be loved. But if this be so, my God, can I presume to say that I really love you? Do I love you with my whole mind, which is so often distracted, dissipated, and wandered astray

astray from you? Do I love you with my heart, that is so often attached to creatures, and still much oftener to myself? Do I love you with my whole strength, I who so often refuse to make the least effort, the least sacrifice, for your sake? What shall I find in myself that is worthy of this love, this holy, this pure, this generous and glowing love? No, hitherto I have not loved you: but I desire to love you, to give you my heart without reserve, and to offer it to you as a perfect holocaust, to be inflamed and consumed on earth with this sacred fire, wherewith the Saints in Heaven continually glow.

THE SACRED MARKS OF DIVINE LOVE.

THE knowledge of the sacred qualities of divine love, may serve to induce us to make it our practice. The most remarkable of these, and the most proper to inflame our hearts, are the following.

1. *Penitent love*; which is that of a heart grieving and afflicted for not having always loved God, and for having had the misfortune to have offended him. Occupied with this thought, and penetrated with the deepest sorrow, it continually says to itself: What have I done? Whither have I wandered astray? O sad and dismal days, co-

vered with gloomy clouds, why are you not blot ed out of the number of days !

2. *Suffering love.* Divine love requires sacrifices of all, but more especially when a soul, touched with grace, returns sincerely to him. Then God, to afford her means of expiating her sins, presents her with sacrifices to be made, and with crosses to be carried ; he puts her in a state of sufferings, and conducts her by painful ways. In this state, the poor soul groans, and feels the weight of her faults, but still more the weight of God's vengeance ; she groans, but still submits ! she suffers, but is resigned : we never believe we suffer much, but when we have little love.

3. *Sanctifying love.* By the sacred fire of this holy love God completely purifies a soul : he scorches, burns and consumes all that is earthly and human in her : thus rendering her more pure in his eyes, more dear to his heart, more docile to his operations, and more capable of receiving the impressions of his grace : hence by the heat of this divine fire all virtues are animated in her soul.

4. *Perfecting love.* In the ways of God, the road is immense, the space boundless : be a soul never so holy, she has still room to sanctify herself, and to become more and more perfect : this God requires of her, and presses her to do : and she, on her side,

side, forgetting what she has done, thinks only of advancing forward, and daily making new progress. Wo to her that stops short, when God invites her to go forward !

5. *Immolating love.* Then is the time for requiring great sacrifices of the happy victim : the greatest of which is that of herself. The victim suffers herself to be sacrificed in whatever manner God pleases. Submissive, and prostrate at the foot of the cross, she waits for the sacrificing stroke, and for the fire that is to make a proper holocaust of her. How heroick is this state in the soul ! But Oh, how glorious is it to God !

6. *Unitive love.* Then God finding in the soul no obstacle to his designs, nor any life in the victim which is too natural and human, unites her intimately to himself; an union this altogether heavenly and divine, by virtue of which the soul becomes but one with God : she lives in God ; she lives by God ; it is not she that lives, but God lives and breathes in her. O ineffable union, what miracles of grace dost thou operate in mens hearts !

7. *Languishing love.* The soul seeing herself advance towards her last end, languishes in this place of banishment ; at a distance from her God, she sighs after the moment when she shall be for ever united to him ; till this come, days seem to her as years, and

and years as so many ages. In languishing transports, she cries out with the Apostle: *Quis non liberabit?* Rom. viii. Ah! who will deliver me from the body of this death, that I may be united to the Author of Life?

8. *Consuming love.* At length, the moment is come, the heavenly fire consumes the victim; and she can no longer resist its heavenly ardours. Compleat your triumph, O love divine, and snatch from the earth what the earth is unworthy to possess. Go, happy soul, go, and unite yourself for ever to your well-beloved; go receive the reward of your sacrifices, sufferings and labours; What are now your thoughts of all that occupies us in this world? My God, God of Love, how great are you in them that love you!

My God, give me your holy love; it is all I desire in this world and the next. Let me love you during the whole course of my life, and Oh! let it be my happy destiny to love you eternally hereafter!

ON BEING UNITED TO JESUS CHRIST.

1. **L**E T us consider in what this union consists, and what is its nature. In the first place, faith assures us that all the faithful are but one thing with Jesus Christ: *Unum estis in Christo: Gal. ii.* with him we form but one body, of which he is the head, and we the members. Hence we should keep ourselves united to him in all things: united in thoughts and affections, loving what he loves, seeking what he seeks, fearing what he fears, and shunning what he shuns; united in our actions, doing them all in union with his, on the same motives, and with the same intention: united, in fine, in our whole life and conduct, in such a manner that our life may be, as I may say, but a continuation of that which Jesus Christ led on earth.

It is thus that great oracle of St. Paul must be verified in us: *I live, not I, but Jesus Christ liveth in me.* Then it is true to say, that, as Christians, our life, our affections, our sentiments, our actions, our sufferings and prayers, are not ours, but Jesus Christ's: who, by the close union he has made with us, has appropriated them to himself, and made them his own, by animating them with his spirit, and consecrating them to the glory of his heavenly Father.

Let

2. Let us consider what are the advantages which this union procures us, and how necessary it is for us. Without it we are nothing before God; and all we can do, suffer, or sacrifice, can be of no value in his sight.

Its necessity appears from the glory, the grandeur, the sublime state, to which it raises us; since by it we become the friends, and children of God, heirs of his heavenly kingdom, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ.

Again, such is its merit, that by it our actions, prayers and sufferings, are vested with the merits of Jesus Christ; they are exalted, ennobled, and, as it were, deified in his adorable person.

Lastly, Our union with Jesus Christ is the more consoling, as by it we may ask for all things, hope for all things, and obtain all things; seeing it is Jesus Christ himself that prays with us, and for us, and in us. Consequently, there is no grace or glory which we may not expect, Jesus having made over to us his own rights.

3. How grand, how highly comfortable is all this! This, my God, I was ignorant of: scarcely did it so much as enter into my thoughts. But if this union be at once so intimate and advantageous to every true Christian Soul, what then must it be in a Religious, whom her state and vows render much more dear and precious to the adorable

vable heart of Jesus Christ? What more then have I to do, but to keep myself closely and constantly united to my divine Saviour? to fear abasing and degrading myself in his eyes, and to avoid all that can alter and trouble this union, which is so heavenly and altogether divine? Celestial Spouse of my soul, since it was you that formed it, so do you maintain, augment, and perfect it in me. It is chiefly by the grace of the sacraments that you cement it; seeing that the effects which they produce all jointly concur to render it more close and intimate: with this view I will therefore receive those to which you so often invite me. O may they render this happy union so strong and insoluble in time, that it may last to all eternity!

Indeed this union with Jesus Christ constitutes our glory, our merit, and our happiness. It is formed in this world, to endure for ever in the next. Let us then be wholly his, and he will be wholly ours.

THE IMITATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

WE must imitate Jesus Christ: But how, and in what must we imitate him? and what will be the fruit of this imitation?

1. We must imitate Jesus Christ: who being come into the world to be our model,

del, it is incumbent on us to conform ourselves to it: as he came to shew us the way, we ought to follow him: as he is our Master and Teacher, we should walk in his footsteps: he himself invites, presses, and calls us to imitate him: *Exemplum dedi vobis. John xiii.*

Jesus Christ has received us to baptism in quality of Christians, only on condition that we imitate him, and become his disciples on becoming his children. Without this faithful imitation of Christ, we shall never be saved, shall never have a share in his glory. The oracle is already pronounced, and its sentence will ever be unchangeable: *Whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son. Rom. viii.*

Thus either we must renounce Jesus Christ, or we must imitate him: must either follow his example, or abjure the Gospel; either walk in his footsteps in the paths of salvation, or strike out into the way of eternal damnation.

2. But in what, and how must we imitate Jesus Christ? Not in the miracles he wrought, but in the virtues he practised. He was humble, let us be so too; he was mortified, let us be dead to ourselves; he was poor, let us be poor in like manner, at least in heart and spirit; he was meek, patient, compassionate, charitable, let us become

come meek, patient, compassionate and charitable with him, like him, and for him ; he was an enemy to the world, let us become detached from it ; he carried his cross, let us also carry ours ; he only sought the glory of his Father, let us be less jealous of our interests and prerogatives ; in a word, he was holy, and the H^{ly} of Holies ; let us aspire to the sanctity to which he calls us by his example.

3. What fruit shall we reap from this imitation ? We shall follow a safe and sure model, which we may copy after without fear of being led astray ! we shall follow a perfect model, so that all our actions will be perfect. In this single model we shall find all virtues united ; and shall be taught to pray, as he prayed ; to suffer as he suffered ; to act and behave in all things, as he behaved. But what is still more consoling, is, that in commanding us to imitate him, he at the same time offers us the graces and strength, which are necessary to enable us to do it.

Adorable Saviour, you have said : *I am the way, the truth, and the life.* You are the way, make me then to follow you : You are the truth, make me to hearken to you : You are the life, make me to live only by you and for you : Let me follow you in time, as my guide, that I may possess you in eternity, as my reward and recompence.

THE REIGN OF JESUS CHRIST IN OUR SOULS.

LE T us consider how highly just and sweet is this reign of grace.

1. Jesus Christ is King by way of excellence, he is King, and the King of kings : *Rex regum. Apoc. xix.* His most favorite reign is in our soul : he reigns in Heaven by his glory ; he reigns on earth by his power ; but he desires to reign in our soul by his grace and love. To this reign he has every right and title ; the right of creation, having made us according to his own image ; the right of inheritance, it being given him by his heavenly Father : *Dabo tibi gentes hæreditatem tuam. Ps. vi.* the right of redemption, having purchased us by his blood : *Accuisivit sanguine suo. Actis xx.* the right of conquest, having redeemed us from the slavery of the devil ; the right of consecration, since as religious persons he has devoted us in a special manner to his own service and glory. In consequence of all these titles, was there ever a reign so just, so legal, so well-founded ?

O King of Glory ! establish your reign in every soul on earth ; maintain, at least in mine, the whole extent of your indefeasable rights.

2. How

2. How sweet is this holy reign! How widely different is your reign, adorable Saviour, from that of earthly kings!

The kings of the earth exercile a reign of authority: but the reign you would exercise over us is that of mildness and insinuation.

Other kings have need of soldiers and armies, to maintain their authority; whereas you want nothing but yourself to establish your empire.

Other potentates only impart their favours, but never divide their dominions: but you call us to the possession of your very kingdom and happiness.

Other sovereigns reign over our goods: you only desire to reign over our hearts.

The reign of other kings must one day have an end; but your reign is eternal; and when once we are entered into the glory of your reign, it will be for ever. In fine, you seek to reign over us at present, only that we may reign with you eternally hereafter.

3. How grand and august is this reign! How holy! how comfortable and consoling! Truly happy that soul, which receives and maintains in herself this sweet and desirable empire!

King of Glory, King of Virtues, King of Kings, King of Hearts, reign in me, and reign in all.

Reign over my mind, and let all its thoughts be employed upon you; reign over my heart, and consecrate all its affections; reign over my soul, and sanctify all its powers; reign over my senses, and purify all their sensations; reign over my passions, and govern and command all their motions: reign in me, reign in me alone, and reign in me for ever.

purpos Receive my homage, and accept of ^{my} ~~the~~ to be ever faithful to you.

Reign sovereignly, reign universally, reign eternally: Regi saeculorum immortali, soli Deo honor & gloria; To Jesus Christ, the immortal King, be honour and glory for endless ages. Amen.

ON ENTIRE RESIGNATION OF OURSELVES INTO THE HANDS OF GOD.

THIS entire resignation of ourselves into the hands of God, is to us a source of peace and comfort, a source of grace and blessings, a source of merit and sanctification.

1. It is a source of peace and comfort; as by it we put ourselves into the hands of God, reposing our confidence in him, and hoping for all things from his goodness. Now what more proper to procure us this ineffable peace of heart, than often to say to ourselves: I belong to God, and not to myself;

myself; I am in his hands, he is master of my destiny, and will dispose of me according to the designs of his wisdom and goodness.

Nothing is so true as that we might be happy if we would; we need but thus to abandon ourselves into the hands of providence, and to say to ourselves: God is the master of my destiny; if he feeds me afflictions, let his will be done; if he suffers temptations and crosses to beset me, blessed be his holy name; whatever he is pleased to ordain, I am in his hands: we then should be freed from uneasinesses and solicitudes, and from all those cares and perplexities, which are the cause of all the miseries, sorrows and sufferings of life. As it is, we deserve what we suffer, since we refuse to abandon ourselves into the arms of God, which are ever open to us.

2. Entire resignation is a source of grace and blessings; seeing that God has solemnly bound himself to give them, and has promised the most abundant sources of his graces to those, that shall enter into those generous sentiments in his regard. And to whom, in effect, shall God more liberally impart his special and chosen graces, than to such faithful souls as abandon themselves without reserve to the paternal care of his holy providence? What is more likely to touch his heart, and induce him to open his

heavenly treasures, than thus casting ourselves wholly upon him, with a view of pleasing him, and testifying our entire dependence on him? Open, open then your hearts, ye generous Souls; persuaded that all the gifts of heaven will flow in upon them, and that the celestial dew will fall upon you in the greatest abundance: were you in the most hideous desert, there the manna of Heaven would fall for you alone, if you confidently cast yourself into the arms of his goodness.

3. This total resignation is a source of merit and sanctification; because it is the most illustrious testimony given to all God's adorable perfections.

It is an illustrious testimony given to his omnipotence, as having in hand all the wonderful means of supplying our wants.

A glorious testimony given to his divine wisdom, as knowing all our necessities, and the surest ways of providing for us.

A most honourable testimony given to his infinite bounty, as taking our evils to heart, and sharing in all our afflictions.

Perfect resignation is a sure way to profit of all God's graces, a perfect exercise of all virtues; it is even perfection itself, and the highest perfection.

My God, I am resolved from this moment to abandon myself into your hands; you are my Creator, preserve therefore
your

your own work ; you are my Father, receive a child that casts herself into your arms ; you are my Redeemer, save a soul redeemed with your blood ; you are my King, reign in my heart without controul ; you are the Heavenly Spouse of my soul, make it wholly yours.

My God, I resign myself to you without reserve, whatever you shall permit, whatever shall befall me, even though I experience the most grievous calamities, and the most dolorous and excruciating states. If you lead me up to mount Calvary, I will follow you thither ; if you place me at the foot of the Cross, there I shall be with you ; you will place me at the foot of your Cross, only to give me a place in your heart.

My God, I yield myself up to you for every moment, and to the last breath of my life : whatever you ordain for me, whether consolation or sorrow, sickness or health, life or death, for time or eternity, in all, throughout all, and for ever. Be it done : *Fiat, Fiat, for ever more.*

CHARITY.

TH E ties of blood or interest, the bands of amusement or pleasure, are almost the only ones that unite mens hearts in the world. But alas ! How weak are these ; and how frail and short is often the union

union even betwixt those persons, who one should have thought were eternally united! The tie that unites Religious persons is very different from these. Though assembled together out of different families, and often from different climates, they are united by the same sentiments; they think, they speak and act by the same principles, and for the same ends; they share in one another's satisfactions and grievances; they love one another, and by their sentiments support the amiable name of Sisters which they bear. This is what is commonly seen in Religious Houses. What then is the band that maintains such concord and perfect harmony among them? It is divine charity, which the Holy Ghost spreads abroad in their hearts. We may therefore pronounce charity to be the soul of a Religious life, its ornament, its support, its consolation and joy.

1. Charity is the ornament of a Religious life. It is what makes them to live and breathe, what unites their hearts, animates their sentiments, and consecrates their affections: without charity they do not live; because it is not living to live in trouble, in agitation and discord: even death would be preferable to such a life.

2. Charity is its ornament. What is more glorious, what does greater honour to a Religious House than the charity which reigns

reigns and prevails therein : That sublime virtue, that heavenly and divine virtue, as it were deifies souls, raises them above themselves, and conveys them into the bosom and heart of God ; its lustre is not confined within, it breaks forth, and constitutes the glory of a Community in which it presides and establishes its empire, which is that of God himself.

3. Charity is its support. So long as charity reigns in a House, this House will support itself, and even increase and become perfect ; being built on a solid foundation, a foundation that can never fail ; but the moment charity begins to cool, to degenerate and depart from it, that House, unable to subsist, will ruin and destroy itself ; very soon will disunion and discord break its bands of union, disorder its moving springs, and shake its very foundations.

May Heaven for ever preserve us from so horrible a calamity !

4. Charity is its consolation ; since there is nothing more pleasant and令人安慰 than to live in the bosom of charity, of union and concord ; than to pass our days in peace and tranquility, to unite our hearts in the bowels of perfect charity ; and to form the bands of a sweet society among ourselves. A House, formed on this plan, must needs become an image of Heaven.

These

These are all daughters of the same Father, spouses of the same Saviour, living under the same rule, under the same habit, and the same roof, united upon earth, aspiring to be for ever united in Heaven, and having altogether but one heart and one soul.

O charity! thou amiable Virtue, thou charming Virtue, thou Virtue most heavenly and divine, for ever reign with us, in us, and over us. Yes, my God, we will love this favourite Virtue, we will preserve and cement it among us: all of us together will have a *patient* charity, in supporting each other's defects, excusing our imperfections, and putting a good construction on one another's intentions; a *beneficent* charity, mutually preventing each other, helping one another in our wants, loving to serve each other, and having one for another all the regard and consideration that our rule either authorises or prescribes: an *universal* charity, that unites us all together, that pays no regard either to dislike or inclination, that is an enemy to all affection or exception of persons, which is always odious and often pernicious. In fine, a *constant* charity, that shall last as long as our life: Yes, nothing but death shall be able to break the bands that unite us, or rather it shall bind them still more closely together; because then our charity will become

come more solid, more perfect and holy; it will be the charity of God himself, who is the centre of our hearts, and the end of our happiness; that is to say, charity by essence, ever living and ever subsisting.

Diligite invicem sicut ego dilexi vobis;
Love one another, as I have loved you. John xiii.

SELF-LOVE.

1. **S**ELF-LOVE is an inordinate love of ourselves, which makes us to think only of ourselves, to love only ourselves, to refer every thing to ourselves, and to desire that all should be concerned for us and take our part. If we speak, we would have them hearken to us; if we suffer, we would have them to pity us; if we command, we would have them obey us; if we do any thing, we would have them praise us; we desire they should approve of what we approve, and disapprove of what we disapprove; that no one should resist us, no one contradict us, nor give us pain. In these dispositions, how can we love God; God who is so jealous, so holy, and who requires that we belong wholly to him, and not follow ourselves? He calls for our whole heart, and we love nothing but ourselves; for all our affections, and these are centred in ourselves;

selves ; for all our actions, and we only seek ourselves in all things.

O holy Love ! Love divine ! how opposite art thou to this destructive love of ourselves.

Christian Souls, be firmly persuaded, that so long as this leaven of self-love abideth in us, the love of God will never reign in our hearts ; but is as far from them as Heaven is from the earth, and light from darkness : and therefore that as long as you retain this inordinate love of yourselves, so long you bar divine love from ever entering into your hearts. But you, Religious Souls, who by your state are in a more particular manner consecrated to God, to what a distance would this self-love remove you from his heart ? Were you to seek yourselves, and to indulge your own self-love to the prejudice of God's holy love, would not this be reserving to yourselves the noblest part of the holocaust you have made of yourselves.

2. Self love makes us commit an infinite number of faults and sins ; for on the slightest occasion and the smallest pretences, self-love grows fretful and peevish ; we molest others, we grieve and afflict those about us, falling upon them, and making them feel the effects of our ill-humour, uneasinesses, and churlish behaviour. If you examine

examine the cause of vexation, trouble, impatience, resentment, aversion, and so many other imperfections and sins, it is nothing but this criminal and pernicious self-love, that can suffer nothing, excuse nothing, bear with nothing, and instead of blaming itself, blames and finds fault with all about it, requiring that all should adopt its sentiments, and yield to its will and inclinations, or to speak more properly, to its wrongs and injustices.

3. Self-love commonly infects all our actions, and of what merit can actions, infected with this baneful poison, be in the sight of God? They are robbed of all their merit by the vanity, the complacency, and the natural satisfaction which we seek, find, and relish therein. It may be that we have done some works of charity and edification; but because we were put upon doing them by self-love rather than the love of God, they will be reproved and rejected; and after much toil, care, and mortification, we shall be found empty-handed when we come to judgment.

Behold, O my God, what perhaps I have hitherto been. My works have been spacious, but without fruit; they have made a show, but had nothing but a fair outside; my life has been laborious, but quite unprofitable; which, so far from meriting a recompence, will be the subject of my con-

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damnation. Is this having lived like a true Religious? Is this the life with which a true spouse of Jesus Christ should appear before him?

Self-love is a true impostor, that more surely imposes upon us, than the seducing serpent did upon Eve. Let us therefore mistrust its illusions and our own weakness; since it often deceives us only because we are willing to be deceived.

T E P I D I T Y.

1. **T**EPIIDITY, at the beginning, is an imperfect state; in its progress, it is a dangerous state; in its consequences it may become a destructive state.

This is what we may say to every tepid soul in general; but with regard to Religious Souls, this state of tepidity is still more sad and deplorable, by the opposition it has to the designs of God upon these souls. It was God's intention to make of them interior, generous, and fervent souls, solely occupied on his glory and love, and capable of repairing by their fervour the imperfect manner in which he is served in the world: and yet he finds in them only slothful, negligent, and imperfect souls, that drag his yoke, and in some sort dishonour his holy service. And how would she be affected, did she hear this terrible sentence pronounced?

Tepid

Tepid Soul, perhaps it would have been less dangerous for thee to have fallen into a state of coldness; but because thou art tepid, and wilt not understand the danger of thy state, behold I begin to withdraw my affection from thee, and even to vomit thee out of my mouth. Dreadful words! Can one hear them without shuddering with horror?

By what marks may we know that we are in a state of tepidity? The principal, and such as are most to be feared, are these. To have little desire of our spiritual advancement, little sorrow for our faults, little fear of venial sins; to give one's self up to dissipation and amusements; to keep away still more and more from the sacraments; to find a great repugnance to overcome one's self, which is seldom suppressed; a great disgust for the things of God, and but rarely overcome; great negligence in our spiritual exercises, and but seldom surmounted: whence proceed an infinite number of faults and infidelities, namely, vanities, curiosities, levities, sensible feelings, human views and motives, and a life too often trifling, airy and dissipated.

O God, how miserable is this life in your eyes, and how destructive may it prove to the soul that gives herself up to it? What is wanting, in this state, to lead her to some ruinous fall?

3. Nevertheless, the evil is not without remedy, and some of the means of recovering ourselves from this state of tepidity, are as follows.

1. To make a retreat, and, if it be necessary, to take a review of our conscience from the time we began to be tepid.

2. To take up again all our pious exercises and practices, and to acquit ourselves faithfully of them.

3. To impose upon ourselves some practices of penance and mortification, but always with advice and discretion.

4. To assist constantly and exactly at all the exercises of the Community.

5. Above all things, to dispose ourselves to frequent assiduously the holy sacraments with the good dispositions which they require.

All these exercises, when prayer precedes and accompanies them, will procure us God's graces a new, reclaim a tepid soul from her woful state, and the God of mercies, moved by her good sentiments and dispositions, wil open to her, and give her back his heart: only let her be careful to continue more faithful to him for the future.

ON DRYNESSES AND DISGUSTS IN GOD'S
SERVICE.

ARIDITIES are often trials and proofs; more often punishments; and sometimes they are graces.

1. Aridities are often trials which God makes of souls; by which he designs to humble, purify, and confirm them in good, and to make them sensible of their own weakness and nothingness. Thus did he often prove the Saints, and these proofs were more serviceable to them than favours and caresses.

2. Aridities are usually punishments mercifully sent for our faults, for our dissipations, tepidity, and negligences: in a word, for our infidelities and resistance to his grace.

We often complain of indevotion, of hardness and dryness of heart; we say we find no relish for the things of God, that in prayer and other exercises of piety we are without any gust,unction, feeling or consolation, like unto the mountains of Gelboe, upon which not a single drop of dew ever falls.

But should we complain of this, or should we be surprised that a tepid, negligent, unfaithful soul, who scarcely knows what silence and recollection are, finds herself,

when she begins to pray, in these aridities, disgusts, and interior desolations? We are dissipated, distracted, full of giddiness and levity, and we say: I have no devotion. We offer no violence to ourselves, we seek to please and satisfy ourselves in all things, and still we cry: I have no devotion! We are unfaithful to grace, resist it on a thousand occasions; in short, we do nothing for God in a manner worthy of God; and after all we complain we have no devotion. Truly, it would be more than a miracle if we had any: for when a soul departs from God, God on his side withdraws himself from her; when she ceases to be faithful, God also ceases to be liberal.

This, O my Soul, this is the source of the aridities thou sufferest; do thou remove the cause of them, and thou wilt no longer experience its sad effects. Prayer must first make a part of thy penance before it becomes thy consolation.

3. Spiritual aridities may sometimes be favours with regard to certain souls; God making use of them for their advancement and perfection, to give them occasion to make more heroick sacrifices, to wean them from sensible gusts and sweetneses, to unite them more closely to him in pure faith, to dispose them for greater graces, and to make them enter more deeply into the views and designs of his providence.

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over them: but then this conduct of God is only for noble generous souls, that are capable of grand sentiments and great sacrifices. When you find yourself fallen into a state of tepidity, negligence, and unfaithfulness, these are salutary punishments.

When you bear aridities with courage, generosity, and confidence, you may look upon them as favours and graces, and even very precious graces.

But be that as it will, and from whatever cause these drynesses come, go, Religious Soul, who find yourself in a state of desolation, go prostrate yourself at the foot of your Saviour's Crois, who is your heavenly spouse; and there in a spirit of humility, and in the anguish of your heart, say to him: My God, my adorable Saviour, you see the state I am in, a state I have but too well deserved; but yet have compassion on me: I resign myself to all, but do you support me under all. Add to this what grace, what your heart and sorrow shall suggest: Jesus Christ will hear your prayers, accept of your grief and anguish, and suffer himself to be prevailed on and vanquished by your confidence.

ON SCRUPLES.

1. SCRUPLES are a kind of dis-temper of the Soul. From whatever cause they proceed, whether from a constitution and temper that is naturally fearful, melancholy, and susceptible of gloomy impressions; or from God, who suffers a Soul to be tried by these troubles and conflicts of mind; or from the devil, who seeks to trouble and discourage Souls, and to cast them into despair: from whatever principle they come, scruples cause much mischief to the Soul.

2. The effects which scruples may produce are most pernicious: they trouble and disturb the mind; they afflict and torment the heart, discourage and deject the Soul, render virtue painful, obstruct the impressions of grace, destroy peace of conscience, and betray us into a thousand illusions, a thousand mistakes, and sometimes into disfidence and despair; and yet how many Souls have unhappily dashed against this rock!

3. We must distinguish between scruple and doubt: a doubt may be well grounded; whereas a scruple is without any reasonable foundation. A scrupulous Soul may be known by these marks. 1. If after having her Difficulties often resolved by her

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Confessor, she still returns again for new decisions. 2. If she exaggerates her sins in Confession: 3. If she makes sins of things that are evidently none, 4. If she is carried away with uncommon and extravagant thoughts, in which imagination seems to have a greater share than reason. 5. If she is known to have at the bottom a great fear of God, and that she would rather die than offend him mortally. 6. If at certain times when she enjoys more tranquility, she sees no sin in things that appear to be sins in time of trouble. By these and such other marks the state of scrupulosity will be easily discerned: this knowledge is necessary for such as are charged with the care of others, and will not be unprofitable to ourselves.

Scrupulous Soul, your state excites our compassion, we take part in your sufferings, and are moved to sigh with you. A sure remedy might be found for you, which is that of docility and submission: but commonly speaking, these are scarce to be met with in you. Take it, however, for granted, that as, on one hand, if you make use of this means, you will infallibly be relieved; so on the other, if you are not submissive, you may perhaps never come to be cured. If you have confidence in a Confessor, in whom you ought to consider the person of Jesus Christ himself, why are you afraid to submit?

submit? It is he that must answer before God for what he says to you; since he is charged with it: but for you to be safe and secure, you have only to obey and submit: he knows you, you may be well-assured, being appointed to conduct Souls, and to that effect receiving from God proper lights and graces. Keep then to what he shall say to you, and God being touched with your humility and submission, will soon either deliver you from your uneasinesses, or mollify them by his grace. Abandon yourself to his providence, have confidence in his mercy, and never hearken to your own reflections and fancies, in which you only lose and bewilder yourself. But rather give ear to the advice that is given you, which will restore peace and tranquility to your mind; and then being come to you self, you will serve the Lord, not with fear and terror, as a rigorous judge, but with love and affection, as the tenderest of Fathers. Give me, O God, this peace and docility! For I desire to serve you as a dearly-beloved child, and not as a dastardly slave.

ON THE SPIRIT OF DISSIPATION..

TO what lengths do we not often carry our dissipation, and what is there in us to which it does not extend? It reaches to our senses; to our eyes, that are curious to see every thing; to our ears, that would hear

hear all; to our tongue, which without restraint is for ever babbling; in short, to all our senses, which fenceless and unguarded, are left at full liberty to roam abroad. It reaches to the mind, which we suffer to run after a thousand unprofitable, strange, and amusing thoughts, that serve but to distract and occupy it, and make it rove about upon all sorts of objects. It reaches to the heart, which gives itself to such inclinations, affections and attachments, as nothing but nature suggests; which trouble, agitate, and rob it of peace and tranquility.

It extends to our actions, which are done without any purity of intention, without any motives, or with such only as are merely human and natural. It reaches to our whole life and conduct, which is almost without rule or order, and guided by caprice, humour, and chance.

Such, O my God, is my life! and is this a Religious life? is it even the life of a Christian? and in this state what possibility is there of giving one's self to prayer and recollection of thought? What is so opposite to an interior spirit, as this spirit of dissipation? No more, my God, no more will I live in this manner; to do it would be making myself incapable of fulfilling my duties, and living up to my obligations.

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2. But how repress and put a stop to this spirit of dissipation, to which I have hitherto unhappily given myself up? for this you afford me, my God, a great variety of helps and succours.

Succours in the flight of dissipating objects. It is indeed my own fault, if I so often forget and lose sight of you, my God, so long as I shall let my mind, my heart and senses, wander about upon all the vain objects that present themselves to me, how shall I avoid being carried away with the torrent of vain thoughts they occasion in me? I will therefore decline and shun this croud of idle and unprofitable objects.

Alas! my God, what is it I go in quest of out of you? or what can I find out of yourself?

Succours in the wholesome reflexions that bring us back to you. These salutary reflexions I then purpose to make from time to time; I will fill my mind with good thoughts, and dive into the great truths of faith, and of the nothingness of all temporal things: these solid thoughts shall call me back to myself, and unite me to you: will not these happily compensate the vain satisfactions, which dissipation might procure me?

Succours in the edifying example of so many persons with whom I live, and whom I see so devoutly and so constantly recollect.

lected. I live in the same state, and have the same obligations; why then have I not the same spirit of recollection? I admire them, but do not imitate them; and their example, when I fail to imitate it, does but confound and condemn me.

Help me, O God, to get out of this state of dissipation, and to enter into the practices of holy recollection: this is the true spirit of my state, from which I never departed but to my own misfortune.

ON ILLUSIONS.

AN illusion is a false notion or persuasion, which represents evil under an appearance of good.

There are illusions of the mind, and illusions of the heart. The illusion of the mind regards the lights of the understanding, which it obscures: the illusion of the heart regards the affections, which it seduces.

Some illusions are gross, and easy to be guarded against, because they visibly carry us to evil: but others are more subtle and refined, into which we are more liable to fall, because they conceal and disguise their evil tendency under a deceitful outside.

We must further distinguish illusion from error: all illusion is error, but every error is not illusion.

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Error

Error is a sort of ignorance that may not be sinful: and when we are instructed, we easily rid ourselves of it: but illusion goes further; rendering the mind more un-teachable and loath to quit it.

We must again distinguish illusion from temptation; temptation is dangerous; but illusion in a certain sense is more to be feared: for temptation attacking us, as it were, with open force, we arm ourselves against it; but illusion sooths and flatters us, and therefore we are less upon our guard against it.

There are a thousand illusions to be feared in the way of virtue; which being a way that is beset with thorns, and borders upon precipices, nothing is so easy as to give into illusion, if we walk without precaution.

All mankind are subject to illusions: new-beginners meet with them at every step, nor would even the perfect be free from them, were they guided only by their own lights.

Let us enumerate some of the most common, the most dangerous and destructive in an interior life: by these we may judge of others, and put ourselves upon our guard against them.

1. It is an illusion to frame to ourselves a false notion of an interior life, by representing it to ourselves as something gloomy and

and melancholy, something so hard and laborious, that we can scarce resolve to aspire to it; this mistaken persuasion only serves to discourage and deter us from the practices of it.

2. It is an illusion to enter upon it without a guide, with danger of wandering astray and losing ourselves therein. When we are strangers to a way, it is a part of prudence to inform ourselves of it; since the more the way is unknown, the more reason we have to fear our getting out of it.

3. It is an illusion to act contrary to our vocation, and to take one way, when we should follow another. Such a one was called to a solitary life, but intrudes herself into the exercises of the active. Another was designed for the functions of zeal and charity, but chuses to shut herself up in retirement and solitude. Every one has her own way, and should endeavour to learn which it is, and still more to follow it.

4. It is an illusion to believe we are far advanced, because we experience great consolations: so long as these sweetneses and attractions last, they go on with speed; but the moment they cease, they stop short, give all up, and believe themselves lost.

5. It is an illusion to run into excesses under a pretext of fervour. Young persons, who are naturally lively and full of

activity, are carried to excessive practices of mortification and rigorous penance; and being soon spent and exhausted, they find themselves no longer capable of doing any thing: weariness, disgust, and lepidity seize upon them, and they become the very reverse of what they were.

6. It is an illusion to be discouraged after committing a fault, and so to fall into many more. What then must they do? Like one that has got a fall, they must immediately rise up again and advance forward.

Besides these, how many other illusions are there! and how many fatal rocks, where multitudes have unhappily suffered shipwreck!

The usual causes of illusions are ignorance, self-love, presumption and pride.

To what strange excesses may not illusions carry us, if we unhappily come to fall into them! From thence proceed indocility, stubbornness, obstinacy, and sometimes the extravagances, crimes and disorders, into which some, that pretended to extraordinary lights and favours, have fallen; who in reality were rather blinded and hoodwinked, than truly enlightened.

The means to escape or to recover ourselves from all illusions whatever, are three: Prayer, Diffidence of ourselves, Counsel and Submission.

1. Prayer;

1. Prayer; but then it must be humble, fervent and constant: God never refuses his lights to them that pray for them with humility, sincerity, and constancy.

2. Diffidence of ourselves. Ignorance is man's portion, and the punishment of sin: so that the most enlightened have every thing to fear from their own lights, which sometimes are nothing but darkness.

3. Counsel and submission. This last would suffice alone, if men had always the wisdom to consult a learned and enlightened person, and the docility to follow his wise counsel. If they fail to do this, they deviate from the ways of God, perhaps never to enter into them more.

A PRAYER.

O Father of Lights, I desire to give myself to you, and beg to be taught the way that leads to you, my God. My mind is filled with darkness, and my heart is nothing but weakness: preserve me then from all error that may deceive me, and from all illusion that may seduce and impose upon me: never suffer me to strike into any crooked ways that may lead me astray. You are *the way, the truth, and the life*: you are the way, guide therefore my steps: you are the truth, enlighten my mind: you are the life, animate my sentiments

ments and affections, and make me always walk in the right road of salvation, that I may one day arrive at the sure term of happiness.

ON TEMPTATIONS.

WE must wisely shun and keep at a distance from temptation; we must generously resist temptation; we must be humble and more watchful after temptation,

1. We must keep at a distance from temptation. Religious Soul, your state is holy, and you yourself should also be holy: your state affords you all manner of helps to become so, and removes you from a great many dangers; but yet not from all: and if by your fault, your dissipation and presumption, you expose yourself to any temptation or danger, you have every thing to fear: Is not this, however, what you sometimes do? By your state you are separated from the world, and still you call and invite it to come to you: you have in your state the advantage of pious reading, and times appointed for that purpose, and you amuse yourself with reading such things as are at best unprofitable: you have moments and days of more than ordinary recollection, and these are the days that you give yourself up to greater dissipation: you know that your connexions with such a person

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turn your heart from God, and still you maintain and cultivate your friendship with her: in a word, you know that temptation is what you have to fear, and yet you expose yourself to it, you go in quest of, and put yourself upon it: is it then surprising that you are vanquished by it? Be therefore sensible of this, and tremble for yourself. *He that loves danger, shall perish in it;* and is the more unhappy, as he can attribute his misfortune only to himself.

2. But if against your will, and in spite of all your vigilance, you are exposed to temptation, you may then have confidence; your state does not shelter you from all temptations, but it furnishes you with the means to surmount them; you have therefore nothing more to do, but to make resistance to them: but then do it speedily, and suffer not the temptation to take root in your soul: the more it gains ground upon you, the stronger it will grow, while you will become weaker by your negligence.

Make then a vigorous resistance, since your all is at stake; your soul, and a whole eternity depends upon it: wherefore gather new strength in proportion as the enemy makes new efforts.

Make a constant resistance, without either being tired or discouraged: if the enemy is never tired with attacking you, in order
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to destroy you, do not you grow weary of opposing him, that you may be victorious over him. It is only to perseverance that God has promised a crown. Take courage, have confidence, your soul belongs to Jesus Christ; he will watch over the heart of his spouse, and help you with his grace. He is near you; he combats with you; he will triumph in you, and crown his own gifts in your constancy and endeavours. There are, nevertheless, certain temptations, which we must despise and pass over, without answering them, or being alarmed: persons to whom we make no answer, soon give over talking.

3. After the temptation the combat indeed is over, but not the danger. Be humble then, not appropriating the victory to yourself, but giving the whole glory of it to God. Be grateful, and thank him for his assistance, without which you had been overcome. Be upon your watch, and expecting new trials stand upon your guard. Be still more circumspect, more watchful over yourself, more faithful to grace, and more assiduous in prayer: the misfortune which happened not this time, may happen at another, and at a destructive moment may rob you of all the victories you have gained.

If you suffer me, O my God, to be exposed to temptation, yet, I beseech you, never

never permit me to yield to it: as you know my excessive weakness, support me with your succouring grace, which I will use my best endeavours to second and correspond with.

Vigilate, ut non intretis in tentationem :
Watch ye, that ye enter not into temptation.
Matth. xxvi.

ON BAD EXAMPLE.

IN what may we give bad example? how great is the misfortune of a Religious that occasions bad example? and what her obligation to repair it?

1. In a Religious life all should be holy and perfect; but commonly are not so. There are some just and perfect souls, who are exact, faithful, regular, failing in nothing, full of zeal, and always giving edification and good example: but there are sometimes others, that are imperfect, slothful, negligent, and irregular, who are subjects of disedification to others.

Now we may give this disedification many different ways: we give it by not punctually coming to the exercises of the community; by not faithfully and exactly discharging our office or employment; by breaking silence, by being wanting in meekness and charity: we give it by seeming to make no account of established customs, by neglecting and apparently despising the little

little practices ordained by the rule ; and above all, by keeping from the Sacraments, and letting too much time pass before we approach to them : in fine by being failing in the duties and points of obedience marked out by the rule.

How many other occasions are there in which our example may give disedification ! Alas ! my God, I here discover my own portrait, and cannot but see myself therein : happy for me if I take occasion from it to humble and correct myself !

2. It is a great misfortune for a religious soul to become to others a subject of disedification ; since by it she displeases God, departs from the sanctity of her state, grieves such as are regular with whom she lives, afflicts the Superiors, who are bound to do what they can to maintain good order, authorizes irregularity, and induces tepid souls to follow her example : so that a Religious House is not beholden to her, if its holy customs fall not into disuse, if its practices are not abolished, if dissipation gets not admittance there ; if the rule be not despised, obediences neglected, and faults multiplied ; in a word, if neither order, nor regularity, nor an interior spirit, any longer subsist in the Community : and she is withal the more guilty, as all the faults, that are committed in consequence of her bad example, fall upon her ; so that being responsible

sible for them, the judgment she will undergo will be dreadful indeed.

What a misfortune is this, my God! I understand what it is, and am seized with fear and alarms: by this misfortune, into which I am fallen, how guilty have I made myself in your eyes! Can my own supply tears enough to bewail and deplore it?

3. Every soul that has given ill example, is bound to repair it, as far as she can. This obligation is strict and indispensable; an obligation under pain of sin, and which will last as long as life itself. Without this reparation, never will God pardon her, never will she enter into the way of perfection, nor comply with what she owes to God, to her state, and to herself.

But how and in what manner shall she repair the evi? By a publick and sincere acknowledgment of her scandalous faults; by leading a life quite opposite to the former; by a regular and exemplary behaviour for the future; in a word, by all the means she can make use of to heal the wounds she has inflicted, and to repair the breaches she has made.

This then, my God, is what I will apply and condemn myself to. My whole life shall be henceforth but one continued reparation, satisfaction, and a sort of public atonement that I will make to your law, to the rule and to my duty: happy for me, if

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by this means I obtain forgiveness of the sins of my past life, and of all the disedification I have to reproach myself with.

MUTUAL SUPPORT.

THIS is painful, this is necessary, and will be meritorious.

1. It is painful; for we must own that in Religious Communities we sometimes meet with tempers, which seem to be made to exercise others; with spirits that are foward, restless, peevish, irritable, and taking fire on the least occasion; offended at every thing, ready to seize an advantage, and desirous to lord it over others. It is difficult, it costs us dear, and nature must suffer, to bear with such tempers; tempers that make self love to sigh and complain, and which charity alone can support.

2. This bearing one with one another is therefore painful but necessary; for what else can be done? Must we break out into brawls and squabbles? And what do we get by resisting, falling upon one another, and coming to an open rupture? Are we the better for living at variance, and entertaining those coldnesses and indifferences, which are so disedifying, and border so closely upon aversion, and almost downright hatred? Must we come to downright disputes, to quarrels and debates that breed trouble and disturbance in a whole Community?

munity? I say then again, what must be done? Why, let us bear their weakness; let us yield to take no notice of, and pity these persons, that are the fatal victims of their own ill-humour; let us strive to pacify them, and to bring them to themselves by our own moderation, meekness and patience. One word brings on another; a little spark, which should at first have been extinguished in silence, commonly lights up a flame that spreads itself through the whole House.

3. To do all this, we must check and use violence to ourselves; but then we shall have the merit of it before God, and this merit will not be small in his eyes. What sacrifices will it not put us upon making? What a variety of virtues will it not make us practise? What graces will it not draw down upon us? And to what a degree of glory will it not raise us? Let us intreat our adorable Saviour to maintain among us this sweet peace, this holy charity, this charity so heavenly and divine. Let us banish all bitterness, dissension and strife, that being linked together with the sacred bands of charity, and all united in heart and affection, we may love one another sincerely in him and for him.

I will therefore bear with my neighbour, O God; as I desire others should bear with me.

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If he has defects, I also have mine: I will therefore bear with him, as you bear with me, with patience, goodness, and even with tenderness; I will support him for the love of you, whom I will consider in his person, notwithstanding his defects; I trust that, by supporting my neighbour in a spirit of charity, I shall draw upon me your paternal charity, your infinite mercy, and the recompence promised to those that are meek and humble of heart. *Supportantes invicem in visceribus Christi: Supporting one another in charity.* Ephes. iv.

We shall do more for others by correcting ourselves, than by correcting them: it is only our own imperfection that grows impatient at others defects: God will make use of the same lenity towards us, as we make use of towards others, Let us support others, and we ourselves shall find mercy with God.

ON JUDGING BOTH OURSELVES AND
OTHERS.

WE would judge of ourselves, but are too near to ourselves to do it: we would judge of others, but are too far off to make no mistake; let us therefore leave the judgment of all to God.

1. We would judge of ourselves, but being so nearly allied to ourselves we excuse, and justify ourselves in all; we disguise to ourselves our vices, and exaggerate our virtues: our own self-love blinds, seduces, and deceives us. Others see a thousand faults in us, to which we alone are strangers; every one says; behold how such a one behaves herself; Is it possible one can act in such a manner? Is she aware of it? Why does not some one admonish her of it? Thus it is that people speak and think of us. But we think and judge of ourselves in a very different manner: because it is our own self-love that passes the judgment, and truth is not allowed to give her Verdict.

2. We would judge of others, but stand in too distant a relation to them, to do it well; jealousy, natural antipathy, prevention, aversion, and our coldness to certain persons, pervert our judgments in their regard: so that we blame their conduct, judge of their thoughts, construe their intentions, and father upon them such and

such views and motives. We do in regard to others the very reverse of what we do in regard to ourselves: we excuse our own faults and magnify our virtues: but in respect to others, we on the contrary diminish their virtues, and exaggerate their failings: we pardon every thing in ourselves, and the least thing offends us in others: our vices are but defects, their defects are vices.

The balance we make use of towards ourselves and others is indeed a very deceitful one: but God will one day reform and rectify our judgments.

3. Let us then leave to God the judgment of all; who will weigh all in the true scales of the sanctuary, and give to every one his due: but will pass a rigorous judgment on those that shall have judged others with rigour. Let us excuse others as long as we can: and where we can no longer excuse them, let us say: God will judge us all, and every one shall receive according to his works. The person I would condemn is perhaps better than myself in the eyes of God. It belongs not to me to judge of others; I should only think of passing a rigorous judgment upon myself: I have so many things to find fault with, to reform and correct in myself, that I ought not to open my eyes to the faults of others: if I only judge according to charity, I trust that God will judge me in his mercy. I have often

often made this purpose, O God! and you wait to see me put it in execution, grant me the grace to be more faithful to you for the future, & thereby to become more charitable towards others. *Nolite judicare, & non judicabimini: judge not others, and you shall not be judged.* Matt. vii.

ON REPORTS.

1. REPORTS argue a want of consideration; it being a great imprudence, to say nothing more, to carry reports one to another; one said this, another said that; such a one, spoke so and so of you: do you know what is reported of you? It is thus people sometimes speak. Some even seem to take a pleasure, to make it their business, their sport and a kind of merit, to pick up all that is said, and carry it to the persons concerned, seasonably, out of season, without reflexion, without necessity, without rhyme or reason.

Now what motives can they have thus to hand about different reports? Imprudence is the least blameable that can be attributed to them. It is often owing to idleness, dissipation, and an itch of speaking. Be it what it will, persons of this character are naturally enemies to peace and good order, who seem to take pleasure in trouble and confusion. What a scourge is this in a Religious House!

2. Reports are often false, and without any other foundation but rash unjust suspicions. There are persons that make realities of their own imaginations; who make others to think what never entered their thoughts, and to say what never passed their lips: they exaggerate; they change and turn perversely; they put a bad construction upon things, and what is most indifferent in itself, they represent in an unfavourable light, and give it a quite different dress. If these things were true, is it yet proper to report them? If an inconsiderate word, or an imprudent discourse, happen to slip from any one, does not charity require that we let it drop, and bury it in perpetual silence? To what purpose, then, to go to change and exaggerate it by relating it to others; and to set forth in a false light what was spoken without any ill design?

3. Reports are attended with pernicious consequences. Oh! who can express the numberless evils which they occasion, the deep wounds they cause, the prejudices and preventions they inspire, the suspicions they spread, the aversions, the coldnesses, and the indignations, of which they are the baneful and poisonous source! From thence too often spring divisions, contentions, disputes, quarrels, clamours, and a sad scene of disorders. One inconsiderable report is enough to exasperate, alienate, and incense

two persons one against the other: or to speak more properly, it is enough to trouble, agitate, and throw into disorder, a whole Community.

And are they Religious? are they Christians that do this! Have such the least grain of prudence, the least spark of charity, the least fear or thought of God? O God of charity! with what eyes do you behold such excesses, and how dreadful a judgment do you prepare for them?

4. It is very difficult to repair the sad effects of reports. You have soured peoples minds, divided their hearts, and alienated their affections; go then, and repair, if you can, the mischief you have done. You would gladly undo what you have done, by calming their minds, and effacing the bad impressions you have occasioned in them: but the stroke is given, the wound is made, and may continue to bleed to the end of life. These two persons may never come to be perfectly reconciled; a right understanding, and a sincere cordiality may never more be established between them, but a certain diffidence, some cloud or suspicion, will rise, and still subsist. You may grieve, pray, and sigh before God; but seldom will the wound be so perfectly healed, as to leave no scar behind it.

Preserve me, O God, from such a misfortune: I see the consequences of it, and
am

am struck with alarm: put a bridle of circumspection upon my tongue: this being destined to sing your praises, never suffer me to profane it by imprudent reports, and such as are often criminal and unjust.

ON PERMISSIONS.

THREE things are here to be considered: exactness in asking them, sincerity in asking them, and caution and reserve in making use thereof.

1. Exactness in asking them. Make it an invariable rule to ask permission, to subject yourself to this holy dependance in all things, never to take upon you to act of your own accord, and out of the bounds of subordination. There are some that chuse rather to go without a thing, than to ask leave for it, as they are bound to do. This is pride, this is self-love, this is a sort of independence.

Always ask leave even in the smallest things; which will be the more meritorious, as it often costs more to ask permission for little things, than for greater. But nothing is little before God; much less in this practice; since if we do not early accustom ourselves to it, we shall afterwards have more difficulty to bring ourselves to it; and by being accustomed to act without leave in little things, we afterwards come to do

do the same in greater : and to what faults do we not thus expose ourselves ?

2. The greatest sincerity in asking these permissions. It too often happens, that in asking them we make use of deceit, guile and artifice : we exaggerate our wants, we ask leave in terms that are dark, obscure, and scarcely intelligible ; we are glad not to be too well understood : this is rather extorting a permission than obtaining it. There are some that are ever returning to the charge ; after a refusal they again press and solicit, and obtain their request by dint of importunity : this is wresting a permission from the Superior, instead of obtaining it. Others ask leave for a thing that is already done, without mentioning it : this is not to ask leave, but to have taken it and given it themselves,

Take the straight way, knowing that these turns and shifts, that these bye and hidden ways, are not from the spirit of God ; and so much the more as after using these artifices and impositions in asking permissions, you may come to use them in your confessions : and thus from one difficulty and deep perplexity you will cast yourself into another. Simplicity, sincerity, and singleness of mind and heart, O. these are the ways of God.

3. Caution and reserve in the manner of using these permissions. When obtained, never

never go further than the permission allows, either in the time or the thing permitted: my meaning is, only make use of it when necessary, as far as is necessary; never acting when you are doubtful, but clearing up your doubt. Accustom not yourself to ask for too general and too extensive permissions, and have them renewed from time to time: the more pain you have to do it, the greater will be your merit, having more occasions to overcome yourself, and to master your self-love.

Have I been exact in asking permission in all, even the smallest things? May I make myself easy with regard to the manner of my having asked them? Have I nothing to reproach myself with in this particular? All this requires that I make the most solid reflections before God; because in this, after all, obedience, holy poverty, and regularity itself may be nearly concerned, and perhaps essentially too.

Self-love, natural repugnance, the spirit of indocility and independence, may easily deceive and seduce us: I will therefore mistrust myself, and go the surest way to work, that I may not expose myself to uneasiness during life, and to remorse and regret at the hour of death.

ON REPRESENTATIONS, OR REMONSTRATING TO THE SUPERIORS.

1. **T**H E way of representations has always been open to the Superiors. There are some representations that are wise and becoming; some, in certain circumstances, are even necessary.

Accordingly, representations are lawful and permitted, being according to the spirit of the rule, and of course according to the spirit of God, when contained within due bounds: but then there are others that exceed these bounds, some of which I shall specify, and by these we may easily judge of the rest.

Such are all unprofitable representations; as when we see that the things are regulated and established, and that it is not possible, or at least convenient, to make any change therein.

All importunate representations, when we continually return to the charge, and are never tired with making new solicitations, though we have already made but too many.

Unjust representations, when what we ask for would be detrimental to others, or contrary to the regularity of the House.

Odious

Odious representations, which unseasonably put the Superiors upon employing their authority.

Representations made with little sincerity, when we disguise, dissemble, and misrepresent matters, so as to make them appear different from what they are and we know them to be.

Representations that are rude and disrespectful, when by our behaviour and tone of voice we seem rather to exact a thing, than to make a remonstrance.

These and such like representations are blameable and ill-placed: and as they should not be made, so they deserve not to be hearkened to.

2. What is the manner of making representations? It is this.

1. The thing concerning which you remonstrate must be such as is deserving of it.

2. The motive that puts us upon it, must be just, laudable, or at least reasonable, and always according to God.

3. The terms you employ in your representations, must be decent and modest.

4. If after making your representation, the thing be refused you, you must humbly submit.

For this end, before you go to make your representation, go for a moment before the Holy Sacrament, recommend the thing

thing to God, and strive to become indifferent, or at least resigned, whether it be granted or not; being persuaded that the will of God is pointed out to you by that of your Superior.

Never go to make any representation, while you are in a heat, trouble, or uneasiness; being then but little capable of doing it as you ought: and therefore give yourself time to reflect, examine, and compose your mind.

Your representation being made, and an answer given, think no more of it; but leaving the whole affair to God, make it your business to conform yourself to what was recommended to you: even though the matter of your representation was just, let not the refusal make you uneasy: God has permitted it, and knows how to make you ample amends; put therefore your confidence in him.

Have I ever made these wise reflections concerning remonstrances? O my God! How often have I swerved from these holy rules, and in so doing how many faults have I committed? I will be henceforth more cautious and circumspect, and will strive to conform myself in all things to the lights you have vouchsafed to afford me.

ON OFFICES AND EMPLOYMENTS.

IN every Community, besides the exercises that are common to all, each one is usually charged with some particular employment that is committed to her. These employments do not always differ according to the merit and talents of the persons employed, but frequently according as need and circumstances require. Among these, some are higher and more distinguished; others are subaltern and subordinate; some are more laborious and painful, others more agreeable and easy: yet, all things considered, they will be found to come much to the same: a little more apparent distinction in some, and more real tranquility in others: so that, let me repeat it, all things well considered, all are nearly equal, and the only thing that makes any difference among them is the manner of acquitting ourselves of them.

Application is due to all these employments from a variety of titles and motives; but above all, on the motives of obedience; inasmuch as we are charged with them by the voice of Superiors, who confide them to us, and from whom we should receive them as from the hand of God himself.

2. This

2. This application should be serious; because let our employments be of ever so little consequence, it is still the will of God that we discharge them faithfully, and the least things become as high and elevated as Heaven itself to him, that considers them as enjoined by God and holy obedience.

Moreover, there is no employment in a Religious House, though of never so little moment, that can be neglected, but the members of the Community must suffer from it. Let a Sick Mother, a Choir-Mistress, a Portress, neglect her office, failing at the time appointed, be absent when she is wanted, &c. every one will murmur and complain of her, or at least be incommoded by her: every thing relating to these places will be in general disorder and confusion.

What is surprising in this regard is, that every one would have others to be exact in their obedience; and if they fail to be so, they blame, condemn, and complain of them. My God, shall we always have something to blame and find fault with in others, and shall we never call ourselves to an account, shall we for ever judge others with so much rigor, and for ever treat ourselves with so much indulgence?

3. You require something more than a serious application to our obediences, O my God! you insist on an application that

is supernatural in the motives we propose to ourselves. For, punctually to discharge ourselves of an obedience, and to do it out of human and mere natural views; by custom, liking, habit or variety; out of self-love, human respects, and other such like motives, would be acting contrary to the spirit of God, rendering ourselves unworthy of the grace of God, and losing all the merit of our actions before God: it would be acting, not like Christians, and much less like Religious, but at best like honest Pagans or Infidels.

In like manner, to acquit ourselves of an obedience, but to give it the time which we have retrenched from our spiritual exercises without necessity, would be perhaps a less abuse, but yet it would be an abuse. In vain should we alledge that we are over-powered with busness, thereby to palliate the omission of spiritual exercises; for when we manage well our time, we find time for every thing: but how shall we find it, if we refuse it to an obedience, which would demand it all, to give it to amusements, to trifles, to things that deserve not a moment of it.

O strange illusions, futilities, and negligences! Is this doing the work of God? Henceforward I will apply myself to it, and, by a serious, constant application, and such as is supernatural in its motive, I will repair

pair my past faults and negligences. Refuse me not, O Lord, new supplies of grace, of which I hope to make a most faithful use for the time to come.

Let us then comply with our obedience; but then let us do it for God, with a view to God, and in the spirit of God. It is he himself that charges us with it, and says to us: Daughter, this is the place I would have you in; it is my will you should be thus employed, and you can do nothing more agreeable to me. Ah! what greater comfort can we have? Or what greater merit can we acquire before God?

ON THE PARTICULAR EXAMEN.

TH E practice of this examen. We make choice of some virtue to practise for a month, or of some vice to overcome and root out: during all this time, we take this point to heart, and constantly apply ourselves to this holy exercise: at our awaking in the morning we call this to mind, as well as at our morning and evening examination: during the day we from time to time give particular attention to this; and when we perceive we have committed some fault of this kind, we impose upon ourselves some small penance, were it but to make an act of contrition, and devoutly raise our heart to God: we take care once a day to observe the num-

ber of faults we have committed, or of the acts of virtue we have performed; at the end of the week we compare the days one with another, to see if we have made any amendment in this particular, or any progress in the virtue we had made choice of.

2. The advantages of this practice. It cannot easily happen but during a month's serious application to the same object, we must draw precious advantages from it. For how can we but insensibly correct ourselves of a vice, or advance in a virtue, if for a whole month together we faithfully and constantly watch over ourselves, and are careful to call ourselves to an account, to use violence to ourselves, and to renew our attention and good resolutions? Perhaps of all the means we have to correct our imperfections, and to facilitate the acts of virtues, there is none more sure and efficacious than this: it was by this way and holy exercise that many Souls and great Saints advanced in the way of virtue, and raised themselves to an eminent degree of perfection.

But then we must not grow tired, nor sink into discouragement, though we find in ourselves no change for the better: since though it be not sensible, it is often no less real on that account; and God, who sees our good will, cannot but second, and

and requite it with his copious graces. Moreover, we may piously employ a second and a third month in extirpating the same vice, or in acquiring the same virtue.

3. Why then have I neglected this holy practice? O my God, I know not myself, and yet I make not use of the same means to know myself thoroughly! I do not correct myself, and I neglect the efficacious helps offered me to this effect.

After so many years that I have been in Religion, many faults still bear sway within me, and few virtues are formed in my heart; whereas I should have acquired such and such virtues, and corrected such and such faults, if I had been faithful in this holy practice. Alas! as yet I scarcely know which is my predominant passion: how then shall I combat it, if I know not what it is?

My God! will you always see in me an imperfect, slothful Religious, and a spouse but little worthy of you? From this moment I am resolved to apply myself with all my force to this holy practice; since your own glory and my salvation equally depend upon it: and what stronger motive can I have to give to it all my care?

Make it therefore your busness to regulate and lay out every month the subject

ject of your particular examen; be exact in reckoning up the faults you commit, and still more in imposing upon yourself some penance: often beg of God the grace to correct yourself and advance in virtue: the shorter time is, the more constant should be your application.

ON VISITING THE SICK.

IN what spirit must we do this? And in what manner must we comport ourselves?

1. Charity and piety are two motives that should induce us to visit the sick: the motive of charity, that makes us sincerely concerned for one another; the motive of piety, in mutually helping one another, and piously labouring to bring each other to God.

These are the only motives that can sanctify our visits to the sick. Is it these that lead and conduct us to them?

People go to see the sick; but with what motives, and in what spirit do they often go?

In the spirit of idleness: they know not how to employ themselves, and therefore go to see a sick person by way of passing away their time.

In

In the spirit of dissipation; they are weary of being alone, and they go elsewhere to distract themselves.

In a spirit of amusement; with the sick they meet with company, and they go to them rather to amuse themselves, than to give edification.

In a spirit of human attachment; going to see a sick friend, that they may give her a proof of their affection, without the least reference to God.

Such visits as these, and made on such motives, are of no manner of merit in your eyes, O Lord.

For what share have you in them, and consequently what merit can be expected from them? Is this the spirit that should animate an action in other respects so holy and conformable to the spirit of religion? God forbid, that by this I should cool any one's zeal and charity towards the sick; my intention is not to put a stop to these visits, but to regulate, sanctify, and render them agreeable to God.

2. How then are we to behave ourselves when we visit the sick?

1. We must consider Jesus Christ as suffering in the sick. 2. We must entertain them with such pious discourses, as may edify and console them. 3. We must take care not to fatigue and overwhelm them by speaking too much, or in too high a voice,

a voice, that would stun their ears. How much is a sick person's sufferings increased, when several persons speak together? 4. Not to incommod them by visits so long and tedious, as to tire and be burdensome to them. 5. Above all things, to sympathize with them in their pains, offer them your service, read to them some pious lecture, make with them a short prayer if they seem to desire it; in a word, remember that it is an act of Religion we are practising, and that an interior spirit should animate and always accompany it.

These are the visits that may justly be called holy, edifying, and salutary: Holy, because they glorify God; edifying, because they do good to the sick persons; and salutary, because they will be occasions of merit both to them and ourselves.

O God, who suffers in the person of the sick, mitigate their pains by your grace, and grant me that of never making them a visit which is not animated with your spirit, and sanctified by your presence. Thus, when I myself am sick, they will do to me what I have done to others: and thus we shall mutually help one another to serve you, to love you, to suffer for you, and to merit by our sufferings that Crown which you have prepared for us by your own.

On leaving the sick person, go make a visit to the Holy Sacrament for her.

ON THE SPIRIT OF HUMILITY.

1. **W**HAT have you to boast of
 O Mortal Man, who are only
 dust and ashes ? of what can you be proud,
 O sinful soul, who have deserved hell-fire ?
 What have you which you have not receiv-
 ed, and whatever good there is in you, why
 do you glory, as if you had not received
 it ? Look into yourself, and there see what
 reason you have to humble and abase your-
 self. Having so many faults, so many im-
 perfections, nay, so many sins, how can
 you bear the sight of yourself ?

Nothing makes you so contemptible and
 so detestable in the eyes of God, as pride.
 A worm of the earth swells with pride in the
 presence of the Supreme Being, who can
 any instant crush it to atoms, and reduce
 it to the nothing out of which he drew it !
*God resists the proud and gives his grace to the
 humble : the proud are the high mountains,
 which he strikes with his thunder : the
 humble are the smiling valleys that receive
 the dew of his grace.*

2. If we desire to please Jesus Christ our
 divine model, and to render ourselves
 agreeable to the eyes of our Heavenly
 Spouse, let us be humble ; let us imitate
 him in this point in particular, to which he
 himself invites us : *learn of me, because I am
 meek*

meek and humble of heart, says he to us. What I require of you, faithful soul, is not that you work miracles, give sight to the blind, and cure the sick : but that you cure the swelling of your heart, know your own misery, and keep yourself shut up in your own nothingness : Humility is what will make you precious in my eyes, and dear to my heart : this is the rich ornament with which I would have my faithful spouse be adorned; without that I reject and cast her off as unworthy of me : a proud soul abjures the humiliations of my cross.

3. I see, adorable Saviour, that humility attracts your eyes, and delights your heart ; and will therefore give myself up to the practice of this holy and sublime virtue. I am unable to practise great virtues, to do great things, and to offer great sacrifices ; but I can be humble, and by this humility may become more agreeable to you than by the greatest talents. I will then apply myself faithfully to it, I will love and cherish it tenderly, and make it my constant practice : I will be humble in my thoughts, humble in my words, humble in my sentiments and whole behaviour.

By this means I may appear contemptible in the eyes of others ; but that is no matter, provided I draw upon me the eyes of your infinite goodness.

With

With God one act of virtue is worth more than a hundred miracles: before God a proud soul is an object of horror; before God humility is a supplement to all virtues, and pride transforms all virtues into vices.

PRACTICES OF HUMILITY.

1. D EPLEXORE your blindness in having had such an esteem of yourself; and say to yourself: I am nothing, and I knew it not.

2. At the first motion of self-complacency have immediate recourse to God, and re-enter into your own nothingness.

3. Accept with a good heart the humiliations that beset you, with a view of atoning for your sins of pride.

4. Desire sincerely to be honoured and distinguished in nothing whatever.

5. Readily employ yourself in all such exercises as are the meanest and least honourable: Humiliation leads to humility, says St. Bernard.

6. When others are wanting in your regard, make no complaint; rather think that God makes use of men to punish you; think how much more God has to bear from you, than you from others.

7. Never excuse or defend yourself: it is hard to do it without pride.

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8. Be

8. Be always disposed to follow the will and opinion of others, rather than your own.

9. Never correct others without acknowledging, that on many occasions you have more need of it than they.

10. Accustom yourself to regard the praises of creatures as so many reproaches, which you have deserved.

11. When you say any thing to humble yourself, be well content that others believe it, that so you may not become an hypocrite instead of becoming humble.

12. If God refuse you sensible sweet-
nesses, enter into yourself, and confess that your infidelities have rendered you unwor-
thy of his favours.

In fine, consider Jesus Christ on the Cross, who is the great, the perfect model of all virtues.

ON THE SPIRIT OF MORTIFICATION, OR THE MORTIFICATION OF THE SENSES.

JESUS CHRIST imposes upon us a dai-
ly penance, which is the mortification
of our senses, self-denial, and the cruci-
fixion of our flesh: this is properly the
Cross that Jesus Christ requires us to carry,
if we desire to be of the number of his
disciples.

At this thought nature recoils, and we
cannot resolve to live in a continual state of
cruci-

erucifixion: yet this is absolutely necessary for all that desire to save their souls. Jesus Christ has declared it, and his sentence will subsist for ever: *Whoever loves his soul, shall lose it*, that is, He that loves the life of his body, so far as to pamper and treat it softly, will only by this indulgence make it more rebellious, and thus give it up to become a prey to eternal flames.

2. This sentence of Jesus Christ not only regards the people of the world, but we ourselves are comprised in it: our inclinations, our passions, our bad propensities, die not in us, when we consecrate ourselves to God.

Moreover, our state being of itself a state entirely spiritual, it cannot be reconciled with an earthly and sensual life. *Deceive not yourselves*, says St. Paul, *they that belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with its vices*. All the Saints have walked by this way, and afflicted their flesh. St. Paul himself, though he had been raised to the third Heaven, still continued to chastise his body, *lest*, says he, *after preaching to others, I myself should become a cast-away*. Nay, our Lord himself became a Man of Sorrows, and thereby became the model of the predestinate. His whole life was but one continued cross and martyrdom.

3. How justly should all this confound and alarm me, who will suffer nothing;

who am so delicate and sensible to the slightest evil, that the very word of mortification shocks and affrights me; who carry my cares and solicitudes about myself to such excessive lengths; who on the least pretexts so easily dispense with myself from the most common penances. How many false reasons, how many artifices and pretended motives of health, affected weaknesses and incommodities, do I alledge to spare my body, and escape the penances which the rule ordains! What complaints, discontentments, and sometimes murmurs break out, when any thing seems to be wanting, and contrary to my inclinations! A little mortification, my God, a little love of holy poverty and of you, would spare me many a word, many an imperfection and fault. Would not the bare sight of your Cross, did I but cast my eyes upon it, put an end to all my complaints? Would it not sweeten, at least, would it not sanctify, all my sufferings?

After all, this body of mine will one day fall to dust; shall I then pamper and indulge it at the hazard of losing my soul? Is it not better to make it a voluntary victim of mortification, than to expose it to become an unwilling victim to your vengeance and eternal flames?

Mortificationem Jesu in corpore nostro circumferentes: always bearing about in
our

*our body the dying of Jesus, that the life also
of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies.
1 Cor. iv.*

ON THE SPIRIT OF PEACE.

WHEN Jesus Christ was born into the world, an Angel came to announce the tidings of peace.

This peace, Religious Souls, he has established in your holy House: Conjure him then ever to maintain it there. The good and the increase of your Community depend upon this peace; and your own consolation and joy depend upon it.

1. The good, the preservation and increase of your holy Community depend on your having peace with one another; for it is evident that a Religious House could not subsist, unless peace and concord reigned therein. A Religious Community is like a large edifice, composed of different stones; which only subsists so long as they hold close together by means of a binding cement: if the stones come to part and separate, the walls crack and open on every side, and the whole building will fall, and be buried under its own ruins. Every kingdom that is divided against itself, cannot stand, but must be ruined without resource. It is the same with you: if peace reign not in a House, hearts will be divided, charity, which unites them together,

will be disturbed, the grace and special protection of God will be taken from you, members will fail, and the Community destroy itself.

Religious Soul, you are zealous for the good of your holy state, you have its preservation and glory much at heart; if then you would have it to subsist in a flourishing condition, and always to maintain itself in the same spirit of fervour and regularity, contribute, as far as you can, to maintain peace and unanimity therein, which is its solid support; and to exclude from it all occasion of dissension and trouble, which would change, divide, and insensibly bring it to nothing.

2. Your own consolation and joy depend on maintaining peace; for what have you in a Religious life more sweet and precious, and what should you more esteem and value, than the peace which binds you together, and closely unites you to the heart of your Heavenly Spouse? You have renounced the treacherous sweets, and false joys of the world: and holy and spiritual joys are all you have now remaining. Now is there any thing more holy and sweet in your regard, or more agreeable to God, than for all to live in the arms of peace, in a perfect union of hearts, which forms among you an image of the holy city, the Heavenly Jerusalem? Take but away

away this union and this delightful peace; and what will become of the interior joy we experience in the service of God? What would be your life, but a sad, uneasy, and grievous life, full of bitterness and disgrace? No, there is nothing but peace in a Religious House that makes it a paradise on earth: if this peace be banished from it, it is no longer a paradise, but the abode of horror and confusion, and a sort of hell upon earth.

Let us then maintain this peace, if we would enjoy solid repose, taste beforehand the joys of Heaven, and render the yoke of Religion sweet and easy.

Yes, my God, we will love and ever preserve this sweet, this charming, this delicious peace: Pax Dei: We will have peace in our House, peace in our conversations, peace in our works and employments, peace in our recreations, peace in our hearts, peace in all, peace with all, and in all places: by having peace among ourselves, we shall have it with you also, and with this peace, the pledge and price of the Elect. Pacem meam do vobis, pacem meam relinquo vobis: *My peace I give to you, my peace I leave to you.*

OF INWARD PATIENCE.

1. **E**XTERIOR patience bridles the tongue and the heats of passion that might shew themselves outwardly ; this is a virtue and a great good : but there is also an interior patience much more holy, perfect and excellent, which goes still further, and moderates and restrains the motions that would rise interiorly, and disturb the heart. One must have great command over ourselves to attain to this. Such a one hears and suffers, yet utters not a word, and seems insensible ; but God sees the heart : he says nothing, but does not therefore suffer the less ; nay, his sacrifice is even greater, for as much as God alone is winnel to it, and he makes it for his love. If any one be wanting in respect to you, or offer you some insult, beware of falling into impatience : That would have too much the air of one that offends God.

2. Interior patience presents us with many sacrifices to be made, but then it affords us means of acquiring much merit, and reaping very precious fruits.

By patience you will maintain your soul in peace ; by patience you will preserve peace and concord with your neighbour ; by patience you will preserve and augment the grace of God in you. *Patience, says St. James, has a perfect work : Patientia opus.*

opus perfectum habet: *Jac. i.* Indeed patience curbs the passions, governs all our affections, makes us exercise all virtues, draws upon us all graces, and establishes God's reign in our souls: is there then any thing more perfect before God?

Patience has many degrees, one more perfect than another: The first is to receive evils with resignation, because we are sinners; the second to accept of them willingly, as coming from God; the third is even to desire them ardently, that we may resemble our suffering Lord, and have a holy conformity with him. This last disposition is only for generous souls, and such as are capable of great sentiments.

3. Jesus Christ admonishes us expressly to possess our Souls in peace: in *Patientia Vellra Possidebitis animas nostras. Luke, xxi.* No treasures are comparable to this possession.

What will be the consequence of your breaking out into impatience, noise, and brawls, for want of taking care to check and suppress its inward motions? Why, you will have offended God, you will have given pain and uneasiness to your neighbour, and you yourself will have much reason to regret what you have done. Had you held your peace, given no marks of anger, but borne all in silence, there had been an end of all. O God! if we had but a little

patience,

patience, how much vexation should we avoid; seeing that time takes as much of it away, as it brings, and our own sensibility occasions more of it than any exterior accidents. I understand, my God, all the good, all the value, all the advantage of this interior patience, nothing so sweet as to contemplate it, nothing so holy, as to possess it. It is what I desire, what it would willingly establish in my heart, and what I make the best Resolutions to do: yet on the slightest occasion it slips from me, an inward motion rises within me, which mounts up to my face, and all is undone: so that to have pleased and followed myself, and to have offended and dishonoured you, is all that I find remaining. Command, O my God, command the winds and storms, and peace and tranquility will return to my heart, and there establish the reign of your grace and love.

ON THE HAPPINESS OF OUR STATE.

IF we are faithful to our state, it ascertains to us a double happiness, which God designs for us; one for this world, which is already begun, and another perfect and consummate for the next.

1. The happiness for this world. Do not you taste this happiness, Religious Soul, in your state, provided you love it, are faithful

ful to it, and fulfil all its duties and obligations? Behold, you are adopted into the number of Jesus Christ's favourite Spouses, ranked with the troop of virgins that follow the Lamb without spot, placed in a sacred Asylum that separates you from a profane and perverse world, and for ever fixed in a region of peace and security; of peace, to make your life peaceful and serene, and of security, for the salvation of your soul: an abode truly holy, truly delightful, like to that land which flowed with milk and honey; an abode that approaches to that of Heaven, where freed from the cares, solicitudes, and perplexities of the world, sheltered from its snares and dangers, emptied of the love of Creatures, and attached to nothing in life, you have on other concern or employment, but to sanctify your soul, to serve the Lord, and to love your God. Happy indeed, if you love him with all your Heart? How or by what means, my God, did I merit the grace to be thus chosen preferably to so many others? This, O this is truly a surprising effect of your mercy to me! But in me a most pressing motive to be grateful to you. But this is not all: the ineffable happiness which I possess in this world, is a foretaste of that I look for in the next.

2. Happiness for an eternity. St. Peter, full of confidence, thus addressed himself to our Lord; *Lo! we have left all things,*
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and have followed thee : what therefore shall we have ? Amen, I say to you, answered Jesus Christ, every one that hath left all things for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting.

Religious Soul, it is for you above all that this happiness is reserved : Rejoice then and be glad in the midst of your hardships and sacrifices, because your reward will be great in Heaven ; and this reward will be nothing less than myself, and all the glory and happiness I have prepared for you : *Ego ero merces tua magna nimis.*
Gen xv.

This happiness is pure, solid, perfect : it is eternal and everlasting ; it is the happiness of God himself. Behold, my God, what it is that makes my state so dear, so precious to me ; and will for ever render it respectable in my eyes. In this state I meet with some difficulties and crosses, and some sacrifices to be made : but you, most Divine and Heavenly Spouse, you sweeten them by your grace. Would I have nothing to lay at the foot of your Cross ? And besides, what are these trials in comparison of the crown of eternal glory you have prepared for me ?

I have left all things to find you, my God ! and already I begin to find you on earth, and shall fully enjoy you in the kingdom of Heaven. How happy am I, if I but

but know my own happiness; if I but put myself in a condition to merit it, and if, by an inviolable fidelity, by a constant Regularity, and a holy perseverance, I come one day to enter into your glory with your elect, there to possess you for ever more!

I will therefore constantly conceive a still greater esteem of my holy state I will prefer it to the palaces and crowns of kings and potentates.

I will not only endeavour to fulfil the duties of it, but also to fulfil them in a spirit of love.

I will incessantly thank the Lord for having called me to it, and beg of him a holy perseverance to the last breath of my life.

FOR THE DAY THAT WE ENTERED INTO
RELIGION.

THIS great day presents me with three reflections, that are very proper to employ my thoughts in God's holy presence.

1. Why did I enter into this holy state! God, by a special grace, called me to it, to save my soul therein: I came to it with an intention of sanctifying myself in it, and a firm resolution to be faithful to the grace of my vocation, and punctually discharge the duties of my state. This holy house opened its bosom to receive me, hoping that I should encrease the merit still more than the number of those that compose it.

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Such were God's views and designs, such were my sentiments, and such the hopes which the house conceived of me. At that time nothing seemed hard or difficult to me, but every thing sweet and easy. O happy day ! holy dispositions ! why have you not been constantly maintained to this day ? who will give me to have the same sentiments now which I had then ? *Quis mihi tribuat ut sim juxta menses pristinos.* Job. xxix.

2. What have I done since I entered into this holy state ? have I entered into God's merciful views ? have I accomplished his designs upon me ? have I followed the sentiments with which I was animated and inspired ? have I answered the hopes that were conceived of me ? after so many years that I have been in religion, what have I done for God, what virtues have I practised, what vices have I corrected, what sacrifices have I made ? What victories have I gained over myself ? am I well advanced in the way of virtue, in which I ought courageously to walk ? nevertheless, what numerous graces have I not received ? what fruits then have these graces produced in me ? they have produced many desires, but little fruit ; many purposes, but few effects ; many invitations on the side of God, and but little correspondence on my own. If I take not care, my whole life will pass away in

in this manner, and I shall find myself as tepid, negligent and lukewarm, at the end of my course, as I am at present; and perhaps less faithful, less generous and resolute than when I first entered into religion: what a shame, what a cause of terror and condemnation would not this be to me?

3. How much then does it behove me to revive my first sentiments and dispositions! Yes, my God, I see it is time. I see it is absolutely necessary for me, to enter seriously into myself, and to renew my holy resolutions and my first dispositions. I then renew them, my God, in your presence, and behold in what spirit and dispositions.

1. I renew them in a spirit of gratitude, for the infinite favour you have done me.

2. I renew them in a spirit of penance for the faults and infidelities I have committed.

3. I renew them in a spirit of fidelity, to be more punctual and constant in them for the future.

Vouchsafe once more to accept of my homage, to maintain me in my good resolutions, and to receive me again into the number of your faithful servants: your heart is not shut to my voice, since you again open mine to repentance and sorrow.

Holy Virgin, who, after my God, are my only hope, vouchsafe to intercede for me: you are the Mother of my God, be also a divine Mother to me; obtain for me the grace of a perfect conversion, the grace to advance in virtue, and happily to persevere to the end of my life; above all, grant me your powerful and comfortable protection at the hour of my death. Amen.

FOR OUR PROFESSION DAY.

1. IT is now so many years since I consecrated myself to God by a solemn profession; it was on this day I had the happiness to dedicate myself to him: What then did I do, or what ought I to have done, by my profession? I consecrated myself to God without reserve, to serve him all the days of my life in a holy state.

I consecrated to him my mind, that I might think only of him, might employ myself only on him, and be free from the care of temporal and perishable things! I consecrated to him my heart, to love him alone, to adhere to him alone, and to place all its affections and inclinations upon him. I consecrated to him my body and senses, to make of them so many victims to be constantly sacrificed to his glory and love: in fine, I consecrated to him my soul and my whole being, to become one of his faithful spouses, entirely dedicated to his service,

service, and imitating on earth the blessed spirits in Heaven.

At that time I understood the whole extent of my duties, and promised faithfully to fulfil them.

2. In what manner have I then complied with my obligations: for here it is, my God, that I should enter into judgment with myself, and judge myself concerning the solemn obligations I have taken upon me. Am I then, in effect, a victim entirely consecrated to God? Am I a worthy and faithful spouse of Jesus Christ? Is my mind only employed on him and his grandeur and majesty? Is my heart attached to nothing but him, and his infinite loveliness and perfections? Are my body and senses become a perfect holocaust immolated to him? Am I effectually dead to the world, to myself, and to all things? Have I led a life like that of the Angels, and of Jesus Christ himself? Has he alone lived in me, and animated my whole behaviour with his spirit? What am I before him, and with what eyes does he behold me?

3. O God, the Heavenly Spouse of my soul, I can answer you these questions only by my grief, my sighs and tears! For can I see, without sighing and being alarmed, how far I fall short of the sanctity of my state, of the ends I proposed to myself, and

the perfection to which I should aspire ? I have solemnly made my religious profession, and I am still but a novice in virtue.

O happy had I been that day on which I pronounced my vows, if I had constantly lived up to them ! I do not repent of having made them, my whole concern is not to have been faithful to them. It was you that called me to a Religious life, and I have reason to believe I should have lost myself in the world : But shall I have embraced it, only to suffer a still more woful shipwreck in the harbour of Religion ? No, my God, you still allow me time to return to myself, and to repair past negligences : I will therefore out of hand begin anew, as if hitherto I had done nothing. A new life shall be to me as it were a new profession ; the new graces you will afford me, will uphold me in my good resolutions ; and notwithstanding my past infidelities, I hope yet to become one of your faithful spouses. From this moment I begin, never to end but with death ; I should never forget that I have bound myself to God by vows, those sacred, those precious bonds and engagements, which should unite me to him for ever ; and eternity itself will but bind them still more close.

THE RENEWAL OF OUR LIVES.

IN order to make this renewal, we must practise two essential points.

1. We must grieve for the imperfections of our past life, and secondly, form a plan of a new life.

Such is the weakness, the inconstancy and misery of man's heart, that after a certain time it is hard not to grow remiss relating to many points, and insensibly to fall into many defects. This is what we ought to lament before God at the holy time of renewing ourselves; as our misfortune would indeed be great, if in a Religious life, instead of correcting and sanctifying ourselves, and becoming more exact in the discharge of our duties, more dead to the world and ourselves, more meek and charitable, more faithful and fervent, more pliant and submissive, more poor in heart and spirit: I say, if instead of all this, we continued to linger on, leading a cold, tepid, negligent life, thunning every incommodeity and restraint, enemies to mortification and subjection, to silence and recollection, and too often guided by our own humours, passions and natural inclinations!

Would such a life be conformable to our engagements and to God's designs upon us? and yet alas! is not this, in many particulars, the life I have led, and of course the life

life I ought to deplore before you, my God ! The last time I renewed myself, I resolved and promised to lead a very different life, and behold I am relapsed into my former miseries. Shall I then go on in them ; shall I languish and die in the same ? God forbid I should ; and behold now is the time of grace and salvation, which I ought to make a time of tears and bitter repentance.

2. It is therefore necessary that we think of renewing ourselves in such a manner, as may make us enter into the way of perfection, to which God calls us.

Every one should consider with herself what it is, in which she should renew herself before you, my God ! As for me, behold there are the essential points in which I find this renewal absolutely necessary for me : to effect which I am resolved with your grace to labour efficaciously, and this grace I humbly beg of you, firmly purposing to be faithful to it.

I must renew myself in a punctual exactness in all my exercises of piety ; in a pure intention in doing all my actions ; in preparing myself for the sacraments ; and in being inviolably faithful to your grace : I must renew myself in an entire submission and dependence in all, even the smallest things ; in sentiments of meekness and charity towards all without exception, and in a perfect

perfect disengagement of my heart, which was made for you alone.

3. Behold, my God, my good resolutions, and the new plan of life which I am resolved to follow for the future. This renewal of myself is what I owe to the sanctity of the state which I have embraced; to the sense of gratitude I have for the many and precious graces I have received, and to the sorrow and reparation which the many faults I have committed require of me: I owe it to the edification of those with whom I have the honour to live; to the care of my own perfection which I have been so unhappy as to neglect; and to the preparation I ought to be making for an eternity, into which I may possibly enter before another occasion of renewing myself fall in my way. I am sensible how much reason I have to fear my own weakness, after the sad experience I have had of it, and after so many former renewals in which I made the same purposes; I humbly trust that the same will not happen after this. Help me, O God, with new supplies of your grace; with this succour I promise to be more constant and faithful to you; and will begin this day to labour for it; during the whole course of my life, may I never be failing in this my good resolution!

Ecce nova facio omnia: Behold I make all things new. Apoc. xxi.

FOR THE EVE OF A RETREAT.

I Will endeavour to let these three reflections sink deep into my heart: I have great need of making a good retreat: I have a sincere desire to profit by this retreat: I trust that God will help me to make it well.

1. I have great need to make a good retreat; since hitherto all my retreats have been much alike, and attended with the same effects. I make good purposes in them, I form good resolutions and many fine projects to reform my life, and advance in virtue: these good dispositions continue for a time; and I shew myself more recollect ed, more faithful and exact, more fervent and applied to my duties during that space: but after a while my fervour cools, my diligence slackens, sloth, luke-warmness and negligence again get the upper hand, and I return insensibly to my former state of misery and imperfection. This is my present situation, as I own to my confusion, and bewail my misfortune before God. I perceive that if I delay any longer to apply a remedy to it, the evil will daily grow upon me. Nothing but a good retreat can stop its progress; consequently the need I have of it is great, pressing, and more urgent than I am aware of.

God,

God, who knows my heart, sees in it defects which are unknown to me, and which my self-love hides and conceals from me: it is therefore time to return sincerely to God, lest he should withdraw his grace still further from me.

2. I am very desirous to profit by this retreat; seeing that it is a grace of God, and therefore should not be abused. It may be that God has merciful designs upon me, let me not then decline or oppose them. As this may be the last retreat I shall ever make, it is fit I should make it in the best and most holy manner possible. To this effect, I will employ every means that is in my power, perfect silence and recollection, a total sequestration from creatures, the greatest exactness in my spiritual exercises, a constant fidelity to grace, and above all, an entire submission to God's holy providence and appointments. If God shall prepare for me any comforts and consolations, I will receive them with gratitude, without being attached to them; if he shall lead me by the way of aridities and trials, I will submit to them with resignation, as they are what I but too well deserve. As long as my conversion is effected, it matters but little by what means; that is all I desire before God.

3. I trust that God will enable me to make it well; as it is he that invites me to it,

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it, and it is only in view of promoting his glory and my own salvation that I enter upon it. It is neither a liking nor an inclination that puts me upon it: on the contrary nature has a dislike and repugnance to it: but I hope for all things from his assistance; his goodness encourages me, his mercy is infinite notwithstanding my miseries: without his grace I can do nothing; but with the help of his grace I can do all things. This holy confidence animates and strengthens me; so that I enter with courage into this high way of salvation, being resolved to advance in it with a giant's speed.

Come then, my God, come open to me the way of perfection that should lead me to you; do you yourself prepare my heart for the grace you offer me: I hope it will not be with this retreat as with so many others. Grant, O God of goodness, that if it must be the last, it may at least be a good one.
Amen.

Make a visit to the Holy Sacrament; put your retreat under the protection of the Blessed Virgin and the holy Angels; offer up some mortification with this intention; above all, ask light and direction of the Holy Ghost, and promise him the fidelity which is due to his grace.

THE PLAN OF A RETREAT.

THREE are four things to be considered and regulated in a retreat.

1. The need we have of it.
2. The dispositions in which we must enter upon it.
3. The order and method we must follow therein.
4. The pious exercises by which we must sanctify it.

THE NEED WE HAVE OF A RETREAT, AND THE MOTIVES TO MAKE IT WELL.

THE need is the greatest that can be; and to be convinced it is so, you need but consider the state of your soul, your sins, and infidelities, your resistance to grace, the little fruit you reap from the use of the Sacraments, in a word, your whole conduct interior and exterior. Whence it appears, that you are under an indispensable obligation of making this retreat well, as well to repair what is past by holy practices of penance, as to regulate your future behaviour by laying down a plan of a new life that may prepare you for eternity.

Whereupon consider and ponder well the following reasons, which should powerfully induce you to make a good retreat.

1. In this retreat God prepares great graces for you; graces which he has from all eternity designed for you; heavenly

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lights

lights, to enlighten your understanding; salutary unctions, to touch and soften your heart; holy desires, to belong wholly to God alone: what graces, what blessings does heaven prepare for you, if you open your heart to receive them!

2. This perhaps is the last time that these lights and graces will be granted you; this may be the last retreat, and the last pledge of God's mercy towards you: unless you make a good use of these graces, you may come never more to recover them; and there will be room to fear lest God pronounce against you the terrible curse of the barren fig-tree, *Cut it down, and cast it into the fire.*

3. These lights and graces cannot be without effect: either they will contribute to your sanctification or to your condemnation; that is to say, if they do not sanctify you, by a just punishment of God, they will only serve to render you more criminal during life, more inexcusable when you come to be judged, and more miserable to all eternity: on the contrary, if you profit by them, though you had been still more unfaithful, more tepid and guilty than you are, all will be forgiven, and God will receive you again into his heart, as into the heart of a good and loving Father.

WITH WHAT DISPOSITIONS WE MUST
ENTER INTO OUR RETREAT.

1. **W**ITH a strong desire of profiting by it; with a firm resolution to give ourselves wholly to God, and to refuse him nothing, cheerfully offering ourselves to do whatever he requires of us. An ardent desire is the most essential disposition to a good retreat: and though as yet you have it not, be not discouraged, but beg it of God, and look for it from his infinite goodness.

2. A inviolable fidelity to grace, even in the smallest things, the greatest graces are often annexed to the smallest sacrifices, and the least restrictions and reserves obstruct the greatest blessings. too long have we already resisted God's calls and inspirations, let us therefore begin at length to love him, since he is still ready to receive us.

3. A total Solitude as well interior, as exterior, imposing on ourselves an inviolable law to keep silence, banishing, as far as we can, every other thought but that of our salvation; in a word, living in this retreat as if there were only God and ourselves in the world. The less we speak to creatures, the more God will speak to us. To keep silence, says St. Francis of Sales, I never found any more efficacious way than to keep in the first word; for so long as that is kept prisoner, the second will never come out.

4. A great confidence in God, as well as great courage. In effect, it is God himself that calls us into this solitude, there to speak to our heart: he even sought us when we fled from him; will he then reject us when we return to him? Wherefore full of courage, let us take a holy resolution to surmount all obstacles. We must expect to meet with dryness, disgust and weariness: but then if God tries us, he will also support us; and provided his holy will be done, whatever he ordains or suffers to befall us, Fiat, for ever fiat: so be it now and for ever. Let us seek God himself, and not his consolations. Let this be our motto: *God alone*: and cast ourselves into his arms.

THE ORDER AND METHOD TO BE OBSERV-
ED IN IT.

TH E evening before we must get the Superior to regulate every thing without exception, that we may have the comfort to say: I do nothing of my own head; all is regulated by obedience, all is stamp'd with the Seal of dependance and subjection. The different points to be laid out in order are as follows.

1. The distribution of the time and exercises: from hour to hour every thing should be regulated.
2. The books we should make use of; there

there must be nothing of our own choice,
but all must come from the hand of God.

3. The time of confession, especially if
it be a general one.

4. The Communions to be made, how
often, and on what days.

5. The penances to be practised; in
which nothing must be extraordinary, yet
some one must be appointed for every
day.

6. The recreations, if any are allowed;
how, and in what they must be taken.

It is not easy to express how much peace
and tranquility a soul receives from having
every thing regulated by obedience: for
then we know what we are to pass to, and
what must be our next occupation, as the
day goes on; besides that special graces are
annexed to this dependance, since God is
a lover of order, and gives his blessing to it.

PIOUS PRACTICES DURING THE RETREAT.

TH E first practice. Every day you
shall take to yourself a particular
Protector, in this manner.

1. God the Father. 2. Jesus Christ.
3. The Holy Ghost. 4. The Blessed Virgin.
5. Your Angel Guardian. 6. St. Joseph.
7. The patron you took at your baptism.
8. The Saint to whom you have the greatest
devotion.

Second practice is that which we have already marked out, viz. To do some penance every day, that every day may pass like those of the penitent Prophet, under sackcloth and ashes, that is, in a spirit of humility and compunction.

In the third place, it is a holy practice during the time of the retreat, once to renew our baptismal promises, to make a preparation for death, a kind of public atonement for the injuries we have offered to God, and a consecration of ourselves to the adorable heart of Jesus Christ.

In fine, we must not fail to say every day three Paters and Aves; the first in honour of the holy Protector of the day; the second for the souls that have the misfortune to be in the state of mortal sin; and the third for the persons that make their retreat at the same time with us.

SOME WHOLEsome ADVICE.

CH R I S T I A N Soul, take care you receive not the gift of God in vain, and observe how much it imports you to make this retreat perfectly well.

Before you make another you may come to be in another world, and to have had your destiny decided either for life or death eternal. This at least we may say, that God from all eternity prepared for you this retreat in the treasure of his graces, to be a means

a means of your sanctification and salvation; that there is no retreat but has some grace marked out to it; that there is nothing we may not hope for from a retreat well made, and nothing that is not to be feared from one abused and neglected; that there are a number of Saints in Heaven, who owe their salvation to a retreat well made; and on the reverse, there are perhaps many among the damned that are now burning in hell for having neglected this great means of salvation; and that the year will come in which your retreat will be your last. Should it prove to be this, what would you wish to have done? Do that now, and neglect nothing when your all is at stake. Nevertheless, do not over-charge yourself with too much reading, that fatigues and overwhelms the mind. Be not too pressing and urgent, but rather act by a spirit of love: be very open-hearted, and conceal nothing that may make you uneasy. Seek nothing but God, be sensible of the vanity and nothingness of all earthly things, and put yourself in the dispositions which you would wish to be in when you come to die. Write down your sentiments and good resolutions; but let not your good purposes be too numerous and general: in short, give yourself wholly to God; there is no other solid happiness to be found in this world.

A PRAYER.

A P R A Y E R.

Yes, my God, with the help of your grace, I will make this retreat in the best and most faithful manner possible: sad experience makes me tremble, after so many resolutions made in foregoing retreats; but I hope for every thing from your goodness. Have pity on my soul, heal the wounds of my heart, water this parched-up earth; soften this hardened rock; be touched with my miseries, and only remember your infinite mercies. I am wholly yours, and you are wholly mine, O the well beloved of my heart! for time and for eternity.
Amen.

At the end of your retreat, put the resolutions and the fruits thereof under the protection of the Blessed Virgin.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

1. **T**HIS heart is infinitely adorable, being the heart of a God substantially united to the substance of a God, existing by the existence of a God, living by the life of a God, holy by the sanctity of a God, good with the goodness of a God, just with the justice of a God, perfect, in a word, and comprising all the perfections of God: what object then more grand, more holy, more sublime, more worthy of our adorations!

tions ! It deserves even those of the Angels and of all the heavenly Intelligences prostrate before it.

2. This heart is infinitely amiable. Whatever can win and attract hearts ; all that is sweet, tender, and attractive, is contained in this adorable heart ; and yet whatever is great, lovely and perfect in it, that it employs and consecrates to our advantage and happiness.

It is the source of all great sentiments in our regard ; it is from thence we must draw them, if we would have our sentiments to be perfect.

It is to us an ineffable source of all graces, which it pours out upon us in the greatest abundance.

It is our consolation under pains and sufferings : if in our afflictions we go and empty our heart into this adorable heart, what sweet consolations shall we not find therein ?

It is, and always will be, our strength in temptations, combats and dangers : accordingly when our heart is tempted, let us fly to the sacred heart of Jesus, there we shall always find a safe asylum.

O lovely heart ! to whom shall I give the affections of my heart, if I do not consecrate them to you for ever ? You deserve them all, and they shall be yours once for all.

3. But

3. But then this heart is grievously outraged. After so many marks you have given us of your love, after lavishing upon us so many precious graces, what should you not justly expect from us, O adorable Heart! Should you expect any thing less than the tenderest love and affection, and the most perfect sentiments of gratitude, zeal, and fervour in your service? And yet alas! What do you often meet with from us, but infidelity, ingratitude, indifference and insensibility? The falsely-wise disown you, the wicked blaspheme you, bad Christians outrage and dishonour you, the tepid grow weary of and abandon you: O the heart of my God! why cannot I make you amends for all the outrages you receive? Heart infinitely adorable, I will pay you the homages of my adorations, and will unite them to those of the Angels! Heart infinitely amiable! I offer you the homage of my affections; animate them with an ardour that is ever more and more inflamed. But above all, O Heart infinitely outraged! to you I will consecrate the homage of my sorrow; which alas! can never equal that which my ingratitude has occasioned you.

Ah! why have I not the hearts of all men, that I might offer them to you, and set them all on fire with your holy love! Why have I not all the burning affections
of

of the heavenly Intelligences, that I might pay you a tribute still more worthy of you! Why cannot I bathe my eyes in a torrent of tears, plunge my heart in an ocean of bitter sorrow, and kindle in it a flowing furnace of divine love!

Adorable Heart! I have but one heart, and that is yours; it shall love you, it shall love you alone; it shall love you with its utmost affections, and shall breathe only to love you. In my doubts you shall be my light; in my temptations you shall be my strength; in my dangers you shall be my refuge; in my grievances, you shall be my consolation; in all things you shall be all to me.

Receive my heart, and give me your own, or at least vouchsafe to reserve me a place in this adorable heart, out of which I hope never more to come forth.

THE SACRED HEART OF MARY.

AFTER the adorable heart of Jesus, the heart of Mary is the most holy, the most perfect in itself, and the most tender and affectionate towards us.

1. It is the most holy and perfect of all hearts; God having formed it to be the heart of his Son's Mother: and therefore with what ineffable gifts has he not enriched it? And may we not say, that he has poured

poured out all his abundant treasures upon it?

This heart of Mary is the most conformed to the heart of her divine Son that ever was or will be: what divine perfections must it not then contain, to bear this holy and divine resemblance to the heart of God himself.

The heart of Mary was of all others the most inviolably faithful to grace: what a fund, what an extent, what a load of merit must it not then have acquired before God? Wherefore let us not be afraid to say, that the heart of Mary, after that of Jesus Christ, was the most holy, the most pure, the most faithful and fervent, I had almost said, the most divine.

Sacred heart of Mary, ark of the new testament, sanctuary of God, living temple of the Holy Ghost, a kind of living heaven, the master piece of God, the seat of all virtues, abridgment of all the miracles of grace, worthy object of God's complacency, what homages do not you deserve?

2. The heart of Mary is the most tender and the most generous towards us that ever was, or ever will be. A charitable heart, a sensible compassionate heart, in a word, the heart of a Mother, and of a Mother the most tender and solicitous for her children. Accordingly, what great things has not this best

best of Mothers done for us, being induced thereto by the natural tendernesses of her loving heart !

What has she not done, suffered, and sacrificed for our sakes ?

Consider this heart, filled with goodness and charity for us, in all the circumstances of her life : above all, consider it pierced, and drowned in sorrow at the foot of the Cross. Ah ! there it is, that we may say a sword of sorrow wounded it, and of how deep a wound did she feel the mortal pangs ! But for whom, and in favour of whom, does she offer and sacrifice all that she holds most dear ? Her heart is as it were an Altar on which her boundless charity offers for us an holocaust the most perfect and most glorious to God.

And now that she reigns glorious and immortal in Heaven, does not this generous heart continue to be concerned, and to implore God's graces and blessings for us ?

What ardent prayers does she not put up, what succours and favours does she not obtain for us ? From how many dangers and misfortunes does she not preserve us ? For what numbers of sinners does she obtain the grace of a conversion ? How many tepid souls does she animate, how many afflicted hearts does she console, how many flaggering ones does she render steady and courageous ?

Sacred heart of Mary! how much are we indebted to you? But alas! what return can we pretend to make you? To honour you respectfully, to beg your prayers with confidence, and faithfully to imitate your example; this is the just homage I am resolved to offer you. To conform myself to your holy sentiments and dispositions, is what I will take much to heart; I will choose you for my model in your resignation, your humility, your entire and perfect submission to the will of God, in your leaving yourself wholly to providence, but above all, in your ardent charity, and love of God. Obtain for me this precious grace, which will render my heart more conformable to yours, more agreeable to your divine Son, more able to praise him and bless him for ever in the glory and company of his Elect, So be it.

ON THE THOUGHT OF HEAVEN.

YE Souls that are made for Heaven, raise yourselves above the earth; and carry your desires and wishes towards the land of the living, whither the Author of life calls and invites you. What do you find in this world, I say not that can content your hearts, but that deserves the least notice or consideration? Ah! did we but know how to fill and penetrate our minds with

with this great thought, what miracles of grace would it not work in our hearts.

1. Let it animate us in our actions. Indeed when we reflect that we are made for Heaven, and act in this sublime view, and this noble sentiment, then every thing is great in our actions, every thing high in our motives and conduct. Holy thought, which animated the Saints, inflame our hearts with the ardent desire of this our heavenly country, and give life to all our actions that must bring us thither.

2. It will support us under temptations. It is true, I have combats to support, and victories to gain; but then, O God, it is for Heaven I combat and for you; support me then against the assaults of my enemies: we must bear away the Crown by force and violence, which you hold as it were suspended over our heads, in order to encourage us to fight manfully.

Let us look up to Heaven, and we shall triumph over all obstacles and enemies: *Peto nate, ut aspicias in cœlum.* My son, lift up your eyes and your desires to Heaven; and you will make no account of the earth,
2 Mach. vii.

3. It will comfort us under all our pains and afflictions. Let us suffer, O my soul, since God permits it; our sufferings will last but for a time, but our recompence will be eternal. All the Saints had their

sufferings ; it is only by the way of Calvary that we arrive at Thabor. Let us sow in tears, and we shall reap in joy ; to-morrow our grievances may end with ourselves ; can a heavenly kingdom be too dearly bought, which our God has purchased for us with the price of his precious blood ?

4. It will sanctify our whole life : for when we live for Heaven, we cannot but live piously. Every day we expect to see an end of our exile, every moment we look for our last hour.

Why set our hearts on any thing in this world, when the whole world together is quickly to vanish away ? Let us sanctify this transitory life, that we may merit the eternal life that is waiting for us.

5. It will soften the rigors and assuage the terrors of death. I know, my God, that die we must ; but then it will not be for evermore ; since we are already forewarned of a new Heaven and a new earth. O living God ! O eternal God ! from this moment I offer up to you all the pains and anguish with which my death may be accompanied : you yourself died for us, and by your death you opened to us the gate of life : receive then my sacrifice, which being united to yours, will be precious in your sight.

6. It

6. It will prepare us for a happy eternity; into which we shall presently enter. Let us therefore prepare ourselves, let us hold ourselves ready every moment, that when the last day shall come, it may find us disposed to receive the heavenly Bride-groom, and to accompany him in triumph into his glory: it was for this that we quitted all things. Happy for us to have understood the nothingness of this world; what will remain to us of it when we must leave it for good and all?

"Beautiful Heaven! I shall never behold thee," said a famous Arch-heretic at his last hour. How dreadful is this thought, how horrid and desperate! How widely different is that, which animates and consoles me, that I shall one day enter into your rest, shall see my God face to face, and for ever unite myself to the heavenly Spouse of my soul! Holy City! Heavenly Jerusalem! be always the blessed object of my desires, as thou art the sweet object of my hopes.

I have rejoiced in the good things that were said to me: we shall go into the House of our Lord. Psalm. xxxi.

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS.

THIS parable is applicable to all christians in general; but yet must be applied in a more particular manner to religious persons. The substance of it, as it stands in the Gospel, is as follows. *Matt. xxv.*

Ten Virgins waited for the Bridegroom, to enter in with him to the marriage feast. *Decem Virgines;* among them five were wise, the other five the Gospel calls foolish.

The first had trimmed their lamps, *Conaverunt Lampades suas:* but the others had neglected this precaution. In the mean time, all slumbered and slept, and when he was least of all expected the Bridegroom came, *Ecce Sponsus Venit.* The wise Virgins were presently ready, and having lighted their lamps, they had the happiness to go in with the Bridegroom to the marriage.

Intraverunt cum eo ad Nuptias. The others that went to buy what was necessary for their lamps, at last returned, saying: Lord, Lord open to us: but it was then too late; the Bridegroom, filled with indignation, sent them away, saying: I know you not, *Nescio vos.* The Gospel concludes with these words: *watch ye therefore; because you know not the day nor the hour.*

This parable comprises three instructions essentially

essentially necessary for Religious, shewing,

1. What is the glory and excellence of their state, that is, of Virgins consecrated in a special manner to God: Decem Virgines.

2. What obligation they are under of fulfilling the duties of it during their life, which is to have their lamps trimmed and prepared.

3. What will be their comfort at the hour of death; that is to say at the coming of the heavenly Bridegroom.

1. The excellence of their state. This appears to advantage in the eminent quality of spouses of Jesus Christ, with which they are honoured; in the distinguished choice God has made of them preferable to so many others; and in the special and wholly gratuitous predilection manifested in their vocation: whereby, as spouses of Christ, they become the temples of the Holy Ghost, the worthy objects of God's complacency, and the intimate delight of his heart: thereby they are raised to a superior order of grace and destination in the designs of God, living the life of Angels on earth; and in a frail and mortal body enjoying in some sort the privileges of incorruptibility and a glorious immortality, accordingly what account does not Jesus Christ make of this holy state?

Being himself a virgin by excellence, if he makes choice of a mother, it is a Virgin-Mother;

Mother; if one of his Disciples was his well-beloved, it was one that was a virgin; if he chooses to be followed by a select and distinguished company, they are virgins that every where follow the Lamb without spot: *Sequuntur Agnum quocunque ierit.* Such are the privileges of virgins consecrated to God. In religion how glorious is this for them! And at the same time how great a happiness! Snatched out of a sinful world, where their salvation was much in danger; sheltered from so many obstacles to which they would have been continually exposed; abounding with the helps of virtue and salvation, good examples, wholesome instructions, pious reading frequenting the holy Sacraments; all these precious succours are a kind of Heavenly dew that falls upon them in great abundance. Again, being delivered from the cares, the concerns and solicitudes of the world, and bound to be employed on nothing but God, the thought of Heaven, the great work of their perfection, and the preparing themselves for a happy eternity; may not their life be justly called holy, sublime and heavenly? O did Religious rightly understand how to value the excellence and dignity of it, would their hearts ever be able to taste all its sweets, their tongue to express its sublime dignity, and their whole life duly to testify their sense of gratitude for such a mercy?

2. What

2. What is therefore the obligation of the wise and prudent virgins, in order to fulfil the duties of their holy state? It is this, to have their lamps always in readiness, *Ornauerunt lampades suas.*

How extensive is this holy obligation they have taken upon them! Can they ever meditate enough upon it?

It is to have an ardent love of their heavenly Bridegroom, knowing him to be a jealous Spouse.

An inviolable purity of body, mind and heart, he being the Lamb without spot, whom none but virgins are allowed to follow.

An entire disengagement from the world, themselves, and all things, having God for their only portion.

A constant mortification of their senses; since being the spouses of a crucified God, they ought to be crucified with him and for him.

The presence of God, an intimate union with God, a perfect submission to his providence, and an entire conformity to his adorable will.

Above all, a continuall watchfulness over themselves lest they should be unprepared at the coming of the Bridegroom.

Offering themselves perpetually to God, as victims to be sacrificed to his glory, ever charged to make him sacrifices, but to make them

them generously, and in a manner worthy of him; considering themselves on earth as in the place of their exile, and sighing day and night after their heavenly country.

By the practice of these solid virtues, our lamps will be always lighted, that is, our fervor will be ever animated, our love ever ardent, our soul ever disposed to put itself in the hands of its Creator.

Religious Souls, and faithful Spouses of Jesus Christ, all this is great, all this is holy; and in all this there is nothing above your state, nothing that is not contained in the excellency of your state: and being but what he himself has done for you, he has a right to expect it from you. All this should be the object of your desires and cares; but if you are failing in it, all this will become the subject of your sorrow and regret.

3. This life is painful indeed to nature, but then what comfort will it not afford when we come to die! For the time will come at last, when after the sicknesses that must end her course, after the rites of the Church, earnestly desired, and received with edification, and amidst the agonies of her last combat, they will declare to this wise and prudent virgin the coming of this heavenly Bridegroom: *Ecce Sponsus venit.* At this news how will this soul be ravished and

and transported! How will she find her heart affected, that had sighed after nothing but this happy moment.

Perfect resignation, interior peace, inward confidence, an unshaken hope in God's infinite mercies, a vehement desire to enjoy him, a lively expectation of a happy eternity, will then fill her heart; or if she has some cause to fear, grace will presently banish her fears, and compose her mind.

Ah! what a comfort and pleasure will it then be to her to have been faithful to grace! What ample amends will then be made her for all she has suffered, and how gloriously will all her sacrifices be rewarded! Then she will see an end of all; her labours will be passed, her trials over, her tears dried up; and nothing will remain but to receive the crown of justice, which is already hanging over her head. The Angels will go before her with joy; the triumphant Choir of Virgins will be eager to admit her into their happy company; the Mother of Virgins will open to her her bosom; but above all, the heavenly Bridegroom will come himself to receive her last breath.

Behold then this happy Virgin now entering with him into his kingdom of glory, and admitted to his holy marriage-feast: *Intraverunt cum eo ad nuptias;* there enjoying

joying the happiness that God himself enjoys, and assured of her eternal lot, she unites herself to the only object of all her desires and wishes. Come, faithful spouse, will he say to her, come and receive the crown prepared for you: *Veni coronaberis.*

How admirable and consoling is this image or portrait! But to heighten its beauty, let us compare with it that of the foolish virgin in her last moments: for her's must come, no less than those of the wise virgins, that is to say, that after an irregular and dissipated life, which but ill agrees with the sanctity of her state, she must come to her end. Unfaithful soul, drowned in the dangerous sleep of habitual sloth, and afterwards insensibly fallen into the pernicious sleep of sin, in which you shall have unhappily continued till this hour, Ah! what will then be your state, your grief, and alarms! Senseless wretch that I was, will she say to herself, what did I think of? How great was my blindness, that for a few days of a perishable life, for some transitory satisfactions, I should have forsaken my God, and given myself up to the remorse of conscience which I now experience! She will see her Sisters round about her, eager to pay their last duties to her, and to procure her the last helps and succours. Ah! How happy are you, will she say secretly to herself, to have been always

ways faithful to your God ! O that I had but served him like you ! But alas ! how different is my lot from yours ! Nevertheless, I must go and appear before God, and undergo the rigor of his judgments.

Behold! the Bridegroom calls me, or rather alas ! it is not the Bridegroom, but a Judge, an Avenger ; and what will he find in me but an ungrateful, unfaithful, and unworthy spouse ?

It is true, she would still have time and means to repent ; and happy for her if she profited of them ! but yet it is a sad mistake to have found out her mistake and danger before the end of her course. For oh ! how rare is it, and how difficult to repent sincerely at the hour of death ! They will cry out indeed : *Domine, Domine, aperi nobis*; but perhaps it will be only fright and trouble, and not sincere repentance, that will force them to it. And the answer they will receive from the angry Bridegroom will be conformable to their dispositions : *Nescio vos ; Depart from me, I know you not.* What a thunder-stroke, what a desperate, overwhelming curse will this be, especially for a Religious Soul, designed by her very state of life to be for ever united to her heavenly Bridegroom, and yet condemned never to behold his beautiful countenance ! The very thought of uttering this single word, and the de-

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nouncing of this sentence, is the beginning of hell. For then all is over, the angry Bridegroom withdraws, the unfaithful spouse is rejected for ever, and there is a final end of all.

But let us banish these sad ideas and frightful images from our minds, or rather let us seriously dwell and ruminate upon them, that so we may effectually escape so horrible a disaster.

Let us return to the consoling image, to the happy exit of the wise virgin; let us endeavour to copy it in ourselves, and to merit the same desirable destiny; let us stick close to the heavenly Bridegroom, living, and breathing only for him; let us be obedient to his voice, faithful to his grace, and devoted to his heart; let us always have our lamps trimmed, and live in constant expectation of our last hour. If at present we sow in tears, we shall one day reap in joy.

Religious Souls, whoever you are, and whatever state you are in, behold these are the sentiments you must adopt, these are the resolutions you must form.

PRACTICES.

1. Give thanks to God for the happiness of your state, and beg pardon for the faults and infidelities you have committed.

2. Per-

2. Perpetually discharge your duties for the future, and aspire to the perfection to which God calls you.

3. Continually prepare for the coming of the heavenly Bridegroom, knowing that he may come at any moment.

4. Be ever in readiness, lest his coming should happen to surprise you.

5. Consider what would give you uneasiness, were you this moment to appear before him.

In fine, renew your confidence and courage, by renewing your fidelity and fervour: your God still calls upon you, and is ready to receive you into his heart, provided you give him your own.

ON PREPARING FOR DEATH.

MEMENTO, Homo, quia pulvis es,
& in pulverem reverteris: Remember,
Man, that dust thou art, and into dust
thou shalt return.

1. In this preparation for death it is your business, with the help of grace, to put yourself in the self-same dispositions, in which you would be glad to be found, if to-morrow you were to die, and go to appear before God.

2. Seriously examine the state of your conscience, considering, with regard to God, what relates to your spiritual exercises,

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the frequenting of the sacraments, and the good use or abuse of grace.

With regard to your neighbour, what concerns charity, the supporting of one another, and good and bad example.

With regard to yourself, have an eye to the spirit of mortification, to self-denial, and patience under trials and crosses.

With regard to your state, attend to the manner of keeping your vows, observing your rules, and fulfilling all the duties of your state.

3. If it be necessary, and what you are advised to by your Confessor, take a general review of your whole life, that if any fault has crept into your confessions, you may repair it in good time.

4. Offer up the holy Communion by way of viaticum, and in the same dispositions with which you would desire to receive it at the end of your life.

5. Once during the course of the day, renew your vows, making a new sacrifice of yourself to God in quality of victim.

6. In fine, make the following acts as a preparation for a good death.

In the uncertainty I am in, O my God, whether at the hour of my death I shall have liberty enough to make my sacrifice, behold these are the dispositions in which I accept of death, and the spirit with which I heartily desire to offer it.

1. In a spirit of submission and dependance.

It is from you, O Supreme Being, that I received life, and it is to you I desire to give it back; it being a trust which you have committed to my care for a time, and which you were to call for again at the moment appointed by your Providence: I offer it you at present, being ready to give it back into your hands; I desire by my death to pay you the homage and tribute of my whole self; and should think myself happy if I could honour your sovereign grandeur by the annihilation of my own being, which was made for you alone:

2. In a spirit of expiation and penance.

I have sinned, O God, who are holy and infinitely just! I have sinned against Heaven and before you, and by my sin have deserved hell-fire; since my life has been criminal, it is but just it should be taken from me, in punishment of the ill use I have made of it: every thing has been guilty in me, my mind, my heart, my body, and senses; I therefore consent that every thing in me be destroyed, in order to satisfy your justice; I am willing to enter into the obscurity and horror of the grave, thereby to punish my pride and vanity; that my soul be separated from my body, since it has so often separated itself from you; that this body of sin be reduced to dust, trodden under foot, and devoured by worms, to expiate the several and criminal satisfactions I have

taken. Yes, my God, penetrated with a just sorrow for all my sins, I consent that this Body, formed of earth, return to the earth, but then graciously grant that my Soul, which is created to your image, and redeemed with your blood, may return to you that made it. In a Spirit of conformity with Jesus Christ expiring on the cross. Adorable Saviour, you was pleased to subject yourself to death, in order to make it more easy to us; and therefore I offer my sacrifice in union with yours, vouchsafe to accept of it, and to make it meritorious in your sight: throughout my whole life I ought to have conformed myself to you; O let me at least bear this resemblance to you at my death! What else can a spouse desire than to be conformed to her worthy Bridegroom? I trust that my last sacrifice united to yours, my pains united to your sufferings, my tears united to the spilling of your blood, will obtain for me the pardon of my sins, and procure me an admission into your adorable heart.

4. In the spirit of love. Yes, my God, I content to die, not only to make atonement for my sins by my death, but also because by dying I shall be more in a condition to see you, to unite myself to you, and, as I hope, to bless you for all eternity.

nity. Alas! what have I still to desire or to regret in this world? Being at a distance from you, ever in danger of displeasing and offending you, I only languish in this vale of tears. O the God of my heart, if death is to unite me to you, how can it but afford me comfort? Or how can it come sooner than I wish! Grant, O God of love, O God of goodness, grant, that on leaving this exile, I may be fit to enter into my heavenly country, which shall henceforth be the only object of my wishes, the only end of all my desires.

Let us be disentangled from all that passes, because we ourselves are every moment passing away.

Let us no longer live but only to die without ceasing to ourselves; and since our life is but one continual death, let us make of it a continual preparation for death: *Moriatur anima mea morte iustorum; May my soul die the death of the just.*

PRACTICES.

Consider that every day may be your last, and regard it as such.

Ostensibly treat the Lord to preserve you from a sudden and unprovided death.

Have a particular devotion to St. Joseph, the protector of a good death.

Go and pray sometimes before the grave

of

of her that died the last; you perhaps may be the first that will follow her.

Say every day a short prayer, to obtain of God the grace of a good death.

Never forget that you became a Religious only to learn to die; but then remember also that a good death can only be the fruit of a good life.

It will be a very useful practice to say the following Litanies sometimes in the year: they were composed by a young Lady lately converted, who died in Religion.

A LITANY TO OBTAIN A GOOD DEATH.

ADORABLE Saviour, I present myself before you with a contrite and humble heart: I recommend to you my last hour and what is to follow it.

When my eyes, darkened and troubled at the approaches of death, shall cast their dying looks towards you,

When my pale and livid cheeks shall inspire the by-standers with compassion and terror,

When my ears, ready to be forever shut to the discourses of men, shall tremble with expectation of hearing every moment your voice pronounce the sentence against all mankind,

When my feet unable to move, shall

Merciful Jesus, have pity on me.

shall admonish me that my course in this world is drawing to an end,

When my imagination, infested with gloomy phantoms and frightful ideas, shall fill me with deadly sorrow.

When my mind, disturbed at the sight of my iniquities and with the fear of your justice, shall struggle with the Angel of darkness, that would remove from me the sight of your mercies, and cast me into despair,

When my weak heart, already overwhelmed with the pains of my sickness, shall be seized with the terrors of death, and tired out with struggling against the enemies of its salvation,

When my parents and friends, assembled round about me, shall weep to see me in such a state, and invoke you for me,

When I shall have lost the use of all my senses, and the world shall vanish from me,

When I shall shed my last tears, and give the last symptoms of death, receive them as a sacrifice of expiation, that these tears being sanctified by penance, may make me expire as a victim,

When oppressed with my agony and the pangs of death,

When

When the last sighs of my heart
shall press my soul to leave my body,
accept of them as proceeding from a
holy impatience to go to you,

When my soul, upon the edge of my
lips, shall depart for good and all out
of this world, and leave my corpse
pale, cold, and without life, accept of
the destruction of my being as a ho-
mage I desire to pay to your sovereign
Majesty,

In fine, when my soul shall appear
all alone before you, and shall see for
the first time the splendor of your
glory, do not drive it away from your
face,

THE PRAYER.

O God! who in condemning us to death,
have concealed from us the day and the
hour of it, grant that spending all the days
of my life in fidelity and justice, I may
deserve to leave this world in the peace of a
good conscience, and to die in your love:
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who liveth and reigneth with you in the
unity of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRACTICAL MAXIMS, CONDUCTING TO
PERFECTION.

MAXIMS OF PERFECTION TOWARDS GOD.

NONE but God has right to demand our heart, none but he is worthy to possess it; he alone can satisfy its desires.

The way to find God, is no longer to seek ourselves.

Have we made as much resistance when the world invited us, in order to seduce us, as we make to God who calls us only to make us happy?

We would have our time to ourselves that we may give ourselves more to God, and we see not, that nothing is more improper to bring us to God, than to be at our own disposal.

No great talents are necessary to enable us to become God's true servants; to have a heart and to love, is all that is requisite to this.

True love is not always that which is sensible and delightful; it is that which humbles and detaches us from creatures.

We live to God only by dying continually to ourselves.

If we find something to suffer in God's service it is because we spare ourselves and suffer ourselves to be divided.

We

We refuse to give ourselves to God, who only desires to make us happy; and we yield ourselves up to the world, that entices us only to tryannize over us and destroy us.

To make ourselves uneasy, is to forget that God has care of us.

God is the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation: sometimes indeed he separates these two good qualities, withdrawing his consolation, but always retaining his mercies.

Let us obey God, since he is our Master; let us fear God, because he is our Judge; but let us love God, because he is our Father.

Resignation acknowledges that God is our Father, even when it finds him our Judge.

God set bounds to his graces, only because we set bounds to our fidelity.

We pique ourselves on having a good heart for creatures, and we have a bad one for God.

Let us go in a plain and simple manner to God, and walk on without counting our steps.

He that gives all to God without reserve has no need of keeping count with him.

We should have for God the heart of a child; for ourselves, the heart of a judge, for others, the heart of a father.

MAXIMS OF PERFECTION TOWARDS OUR
NEIGHBOUR.

WE owe four things to our neighbour; to bear with his faults, to help him in his wants, to comfort him in his afflictions, and to edify him by our example and behaviour.

Charity is the apple of the eye; he that wounds it, wounds in a sensible part.

It is flying from men, to desire to have no dealings but with the perfect.

If we ourselves had not so many faults, we should not take so much pleasure in observing those of others.

What makes other people's vanity insupportable to us, is that it shocks our own.

It is often some imperfection that makes us blame the imperfect.

We like not to be forgotten by others, only because we have not learned to forget ourselves.

The discontents we receive from others that are dear to us, teach us to disengage our hearts from them.

We should never be out of our count, if we would never count upon creatures.

We break our own passionate temper by supporting those of others.

U

We

We are willing to forget the world, but at the bottom we would not be forgotten by it.

It is very unjust to forget all the pleasures that have been done us, for one displeasure they had a mind to do us.

It very seldom happens that a hasty judgment is not a false one.

Such a one, whom you despise, will one day perhaps be higher in Heaven than you.

Let us consider our neighbour, not in himself, but in the person of Jesus Christ; for then he will not only be dear, but respectable to us,

Some that should only complain of themselves, complain of all the world besides.

The fall of the strong is a lesson which God gives to the weak.

MAXIMS OF PERFECTION WITH REGARD
TO OURSELVES.

IT is not by speaking and hearing the language of perfection that we become perfect; the great point is to speak little, and do a great deal, without troubling ourselves about being seen.

You have less need to acquire new lights, than to put those in practice which you have received.

Osten

Often what we think impossible, is only so to our sloth; and what we judge to be overwhelming is only so to our self-love.

One single day of liberty given to our inclinations, strengthens them more, than many year's restraint had weakened and subdued them.

A will which is content with that of God, while every thing else is taken from it, is the greatest of all loves.

We talk of nothing but of putting ourselves into the hands of God, and yet we would have security and assurances given us.

If in giving yourself up to God you seek for other resources, you act like one who begs to die without losing his life.

We would always know whether we are going, without trusting in God who conducts us: and this is what lengthens our journey, and often leads us out of our way.

Your grievances often come from yourself, and you occasion them by hearkening to yourself.

He that has studied well his crucifix knows every thing.

Jesus Christ is a crucified and crucifying God: he was crucified for his enemies, and he crucifies his friends.

In crosses we suffer much, because we have little love.

You will never have peace with yourself, but inasmuch as you declare a continual war against yourself.

You are scrupulous in trivial matters, and you are not so with regard to your obstinacy and indocility: docile children hold their peace, and do as they are bid.

To see one's misery, and to be disengaged at it, is not true humility, but a proud vexation, which is worse than pride itself.

When you have committed a fault, stop not to reflect upon it, but to be sorry for what you have done, and to repair it.

Sometimes we willingly humble ourselves, but seldom love to be humbled by others.

Self love feeds upon consolations and spiritual gusts: but perfect love lives upon crosses and sacrifices.

Every hour and every moment we stamp on our forehead a mark of glory or confusion for an eternity.

GENERAL PRACTICAL MAXIMS.

SALVATION is your only affair; to which nothing must be preferred, nothing compared, in which nothing must be risked, and to which every thing must be sacrificed.

Let us seek less to know than to practise, less to reflect than to act, less to live than to die.

To know how to suffer without complaining, to be tired without shewing it, to amuse one's self without being dissipated; to mortify one's self without letting it appear, is a great science indeed, but a very rare one.

Nothing is long but what is eternal.

Provided we go to Heaven, it matters but little which way we go.

We pass our whole life in forming projects, and should want another to put them in execution.

Most people spend one half of their life in making the other unhappy: what a strange preparation is this for an eternity!

The past time supplies us with matter of regret, the present of vexation, the future of fears: let us put all in the hands of God.

Think that ere long your body will be in the grave, your soul before its sovereign Judge, and your lot in eternity.

Very soon we shall have no more to suffer, but then it will be the time to reign : let us therefore suffer a few days that we may reign for ever.

If every day we died to ourselves, there will not much remain to die the last.

Let your mind be in heaven, and your heart will be at rest here on earth.

Man complains that his life is short, and yet he finds his days too long.

The time to seek God, is life : the time to find God, is death : the time to possess him, is eternity.

Would you know how Jesus Christ may be found ? Humility will place you at the foot of his cross, confidence will put you into his hands, and love will introduce you into his heart.

We must keep our mind recollected to hearken to God, and our heart free and disengaged to follow him.

It is not so much the living we should consult upon the business of salvation, as the dying and the dead.

Time flies away, eternity is drawing near : and are we ready to step into it ? and what have we done to merit a happy one ?

SENTIMENTS.

I will no longer cleave to any thing but God, seeing the nothingness of all besides; happy had it been for me to have known it sooner.

Let us go to God the shortest way. Let us forget creatures, faithful soul, and the spouse of hearts will never forget us.

We are oftentimes more grieved for our crosses than for our sins.

My God, my sins have made you to shed all your precious blood, and they have not made me to shed one tear.

My God, this day I abandon myself to your will, as I shall one day be given up to your justice.

It is in the very presence of God that we forget him, forsake him, and offend him.

If all things be nothing to us, God will be every thing to us.

My God, if I could live without love, why cannot I die without sorrow?

We are extremely sensible to the reproaches of men, and are quite insensible to those of conscience.

How unworthy is it of God, and how dangerous to ourselves, to be willing always to remain such as we are!

My God, if you judge me unworthy of the martyrdom of blood, grant me at least that of love.

Le_t

Let us despise temporary comforts, that we may desire those that are eternal.

When there is no more of me, then O cross, there is no more of thee.

How happy is it to have ones purgatory in this world ! Be it ever so severe, it is still a purgatory of mercy and not of justice.

Let us forsake creatures before they forsake us.

If we truly loved God, we should do and suffer little things with as noble and generous a heart as great ones.

Think that you have lost all the time during which you loved not God.

Alas ! how great a share of your whole life is then totally lost !

We count our years, can we also count our virtues ?

PIOUS PRACTICES.

W W shall finish this little work with a collection of pious practices, that are proper for an interior life ; of themselves they have nothing extraordinary in them, but being animated with a perfect motive, they will become great and precious in the sight of God, who makes less account of our actions than of our hearts, and prizes our sentiments and dispositions more than our works.

GENERAL PRACTICES.

1. **T**O be exact and punctual in making our particular examen ; this being one of the best means to extirpate our vices and to acquire all Virtues.

2. To make every confession and communion, as if it were to be the last of our life : this being the way to avoid all uneasiness concerning the manner in which we frequent the Sacraments.

3. Just before receiving absolution, to think that we are at the foot of the cross ; and that the blood of Jesus Christ is going to be poured out upon us, in order to wash away our sins, and then not to lose our time in seeking out our sins, or considering whether we have confessed all ; which is an illusion that only serves to distract our mind, and diminish our sentiments of contrition.

4. In every communion to have a particular intention, and to offer it up for that intention, for example, to beg grace to overcome some temptation, to bear patiently such or such an affliction, to obtain the grace of a happy death, and the like. This holy practice renews our attention and fervour.

5. Often to make a spiritual communion ; this being an excellent way to unite ourselves to God, to obtain his graces, and give tokens of our love. What indeed should

should we desire in this world, but to be constantly united to God ?

6. Every month take some Saint whom we are to honour as our protector, and to choose some virtue to be made our special practice.

7. Every day to make a short prayer to beg the grace of a Good death; for by so doing we shall not be exposed to be surprised by it.

8. Always to carry about us the relick of some Saint, or some other mark of piety.

9. In time of affliction or temptation, to make a Novene to some Saint to whom we have a particular devotion; above all, to the Blessed Virgin and Holy Angels.

10. Frequently to unite our sufferings and all our actions to those of Jesus Christ; this is the way to mitigate the one, and to sanctify the other.

11. When we awake in the morning, to think that we may die before night; and at night, before we fall asleep, to recommend our soul to God; since to morrow we may be no more.

MORE PARTICULAR PRACTICES.

1. **N**EVER to complain of our sufferings and crosses, unless necessity or some lawful reason require it.

2. Never to excuse ones self, except charity and edification oblige us to it.

3. Never

3. Never to speak ill of another in any thing whatever, and never well of ourselves.

4. When any pain is given us, never to let it appear, but rather offer it to God in silence.

5. When we have committed any fault, or been unfaithful to grace, to make an act of contrition for it upon the spot, and impose some small penance upon ourselves.

6. Never to contest with others, but to yield and be silent.

7. To support and have patience with persons of a bad temper; knowing it is very advantageous to be with such.

8. To promise never to commit a fault voluntarily and with full reflection, lest we should contritiate the Holy Ghost and put an obstacle to his graces.

9. To propose to make every day so many acts of mortification either exterior or interior.

10. To do all our actions on a motive of divine love, as being the most perfect and glorious to God.

11. To be beforehand with those that have been wanting in our regard, and to seek to render some service to such as we find some coldness for.

12. To be two friends united in God, and to promise to admonish each other of their faults and defects.

13. To

228 MORE PARTICULAR PRACTICES.

13. To say some prayers for the conversion of sinners, heretics and unbelievers. Saint Teresa had this practice extremely at heart.

14. To get some prayers imposed upon us by way of penance; which are more meritorious before God.

15. To go sometimes to pray upon the grave in which we are to be buried.

16. To break our will on every occasion; this being the great art and secret of always doing the will of God.

17. To conceal, as much as we can, the good we do, and to be less careful to dissemble our faults.

18. To keep, as far as we can, to a common life in all things, without singularity, distinction, or any thing else that is too remarkable: which often rather serves to feed self-love, than to practise the true love of God.

19. Willingly to take part in good works, and still more readily to leave to others the honour of their success.

20. To refrain from uttering a quaint saying, by which we might seem to display our wit.

21. To deprive ourselves of many satisfactions, though innocent and allowable, in order to make atonement for the many faults we have committed.

22. Above

22. Above all, to keep ourselves constantly in God's presence; which all the Saints made their practice, and without which we shall never become truly holy.

In fine, all practices of piety shall be comprised in these few words: To love God purely for himself, to suffer patiently, and to die constantly to ourselves: This is the true science of the Saints, and the sacred badge of God's Elect.

Perhaps some one will say, that it costs us dear to lead such an interior, hidden, mortified and penitential life.

To this I answer, 1. That we think nothing painful, when we are firmly resolved to save our souls.

2. That it costs us nothing, when divine love puts us upon acting.

3. That he should think nothing much, who has reason to say: Hell itself is justly my due.

4. That though it cost as much more than it does, an eternity of glory and happiness is surely enough to compensate a few years of trials and combats.

ASPIRATIONS, OR ELEVATIONS OF OUR
HEARTS TO GOD.

NOTHING is so proper as frequent aspirations to maintain us in the presence of God: these being like so many flaming darts that fly from the heart and mount up to Heaven.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

WHEN, O my God, shall I love you with my whole heart? I have often said I did so, but have yet to begin.

My heart should be wholly employed in loving you, and it is filled with nothing but self-love.

O sacred fire! that always burnest, and art never extinguished, inflame and consume my heart.

My God, I desire to love you before all things, above all things, and preferably to all.

Extinguish in my heart every affection that is not for you.

Either may I cease to live, or live only to love you!

O truly happy are the Saints, who love you perfectly in Heaven! When shall I enjoy the same happiness?

FOR

ON SORROW FOR SIN.

HOW do I grieve for having offended you, my God! Why cannot I wash my sins in my tears and in my blood!

I have sinned; Ah! why cannot I die with grief!

How happy should I be, my God, if I had never offended you!

So long as I live I will bewail my sins; for how can I be comforted, who have offended my God?

I ought not to have lived but to love you, and I have lived only to offend you.

O God, form in me a heart that is broken with compunction and sorrow.

My God, encrease my sorrow, and let it be as lasting as life itself.

IN A STATE OF SUFFERING.

ISsuffer, O my God, do you support me; without your assistance I sink under the weight of my evils.

I suffer, but my sins deserve much more.

Hell is my due, and should I complain of my sufferings?

O God, who suffered and died for me,

grant me the grace to suffer, and if it must be, to die for you.

O God of goodness and mercy, in what a state of dryness do you leave my soul! it is in your sight like dry and parched-up earth.

Have you wholly withdrawn yourself from me, O God! and do you refuse me the very least of your comforts?

O God, you are my Father; to whom can an afflicted child have recourse, but to the most tender of Fathers?

O Cross of my adorable Saviour, I embrace you, and cast all my sufferings at your feet.

O Saviour God, I unite my sufferings to yours: how comfortable does this union render them to me?

IN THE TIME OF TEMPTATION.

SUPPORT me, O God! I am in danger of perishing: Lord, save us, we perish: Domine, salva nos, perimus.

All hell seems to be let loose against me; you are my only support; abandon me not: Ne derelinquas me, Domine.

Come to my succour, O Almighty God, and save my soul, which is the price of your pre-

precious blood: Aduva nos, Deus, Iul-
taris noster.

Adorable heart of my Saviour, be my
refuge and strength against the enemies
of my salvation: Tuus sum ego, salvum
me fac.

May I rather die, my God, than ever
offend you: Non moriar sed vivam.

Lord; I suffer violence, do thou answer
for me: Domine vim patior, responde pro
me.

Ah! Lord, if you suffer me to be tempt-
ed; at least suffer me not to yield to temp-
tation: Ne nos inducas in tentationem.

IN A STATE OF TEPIDITY.

I Tremble, O God, at the sight of the
tepid languishing state I am in: Should
I choose to appear before you in this dole-
ful state?

Is it serving you, O God of holiness, thus
to serve you with so much tepidity?

Suffer me not to live in dispositions so
unworthy of you, and so little agreeable to
my engagements.

Renew my affections, give me a new
spirit, and kindle in my breast the sacred
fire of your holy love.

Cau a faithful spouse live in a kind of indifference for the heavenly Bridegroom of her soul?

Alas! I sigh and groan under my sloth and tepidity; but what do I do to shake it off?

Holy Fervor, come and reign in my soul, and firmly establish your sway therein. Amen.



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